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LEVERAGING A TEACHER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IN A COMPLEX SYSTEM

by

Jami Holbein Swanson

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
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Under the Supervision of Professor Edmund T. Hamann

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LEVERAGING A MENTOR PROGRAM IN A COMPLEX SYSTEM

Jami Holbein Swanson, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2016

Adviser: Edmund T. Hamann

The support a beginning teacher receives varies from school to school, and from district to district. When beginning teachers are not supported, their learning as teachers is not maximized. New teacher induction is the strategy most school districts employ to support new-hires. Current scholarship suggests the terms *induction* and *mentor program* are often used interchangeably, but actually have very different definitions. Mentors programs are one component of a comprehensive induction program; where as, an induction program is a series of events or activities in the beginning years of a teacher's career.

Effectively leveraging the mentorship program in a complex system meant creating the time and space for instructional conversations between new-hires, mentors and principals. How to create that space and time required examining and understanding the experiences of all stakeholders involved in the mentorship program and the district as a whole. This design research study implemented the Integrative Learning Design (ILD) framework proposed by Bannan-Ritland (2003) provided both the structure and flexibility to explore complex systems in naturalistic settings. The ILD is comprised of four stages: (a) Informed Exploration, (b) Enactment, (c) Evaluation: Local Impact, (d) Evaluation: Broader Impact. The informed exploration of this study included a review of the program history and a survey of the literature. Data collected for this study include

archival data, 659 surveys of new-hire and mentor experiences, 232 classroom observations, and 6 focus interviews with principals.

Findings from this design study indicated that creating the space for new-hires and mentors to learn and grow in a complex system means adapting to changes, dealing with conflict, and constantly asking ourselves as scholarly practitioners, “Why we are doing this?” and “Why we are doing this, this way?” as we work to impact policy and practice. Adaptations and iterations of the program will continue to as the mentorship program in this study evolves.

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”
(Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, 1942, p. 143)

Working in a complex system means adapting to changes, dealing with conflict, and constantly learning.”

Larry Cuban, *The Difference Between Complicated and Complex Matters*, June 2010)

Dedication

I dedicate this Dissertation to my own mentors, who have shown me the value of mentorship, and to the mentors, new-hires, and principals who participated in this study. This dedication also extends especially to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement.

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Over the past six years I have received support and encouragement from a great number of individuals. Dr. Ted Hamann's guidance has made this a thoughtful and rewarding journey. I would like to thank my dissertation committee of Ali Moeller, Jenelle Reeves, Lauren Gatti, and John Mackiel for their support. Dr. Margaret Latta taught me to theorize my practice, and continue to practice my theory.

Cynthia Hobbs spent countless hours listening to me talk about my research, proofreading, and sharing the delicate differences in dashes as punctuation—thank you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In my sixth year as a well-traveled middle school Spanish teacher, Lincoln, Nebraska passed a bond to build two new high schools. I applied for and secured the position of World Language Department Chair at one of the two new schools. Opening a new high school is an opportunity of a lifetime. Although still mainly a classroom teacher, at the administratively I interviewed and hired language teachers, ordered curriculum, and reviewed and chose the newest and most advanced language labs. I worked with counselors on student schedules and with language teachers on instruction and classroom management. As World Language Department Chair, I was getting glimpses of what it was like to be an administrator. This piqued my curiosity and I became focused on how teacher effectiveness impacted student learning. I began to wonder: What impact could I have on student learning if I were in a role where, by guaranteeing a viable structure, I could assist teachers in becoming more effective in their daily work?

Four years at the new high school passed quickly, and then the Lincoln Public School's (LPS) World Language Curriculum Specialist position became available. I followed my curiosity. The district level administrative position was posted as .5 FTE 7–12 World Language Curriculum Specialist and .5 FTE Professional Development Specialist. Because of my role as World Language Department Chair, I understood the duties for the district World Language Curriculum Specialist—that was what attracted me to the new opportunity. But the other half of the position, the role of professional

development, was less familiar. I took it on and quickly encountered a steep learning curve! What had I taken on, and what I was going to do with it?

I began reviewing historical documents left behind in file cabinets from three previous supervisors. At the same time of the file review, the district began offering Adaptive Schools training (Garmston and Wellman, 2013) for administrators prompting me to ask questions such as, “*Why are we doing this?*” and, “*Why are we doing this, this way?*” I quickly discovered I had inherited an imperiled program of incredible potential. My professional development duties included checking transcripts to ensure probationary teachers met the districted-mandated tenure requirements, supporting national board candidates, and leading the district mentor program. Related to each of these tasks, but particularly the last, I immediately began searching for support. That led me to the cohort-oriented doctoral program that would provide the structure and freedom to deeply study the “new teacher experience” as a “problem of practice” (Latta and Wunder, 2012, p. ix).

I enrolled in graduate school to better understand myself, educational politics and policy, as well as to fulfill a keen interest in “the dance” (Heaton, 2000) between theory and practice. In becoming a Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) student, I decided my particular problem of practice has been the district mentor program. My life-long larger problem of practice is modeling the work of a scholarly practitioner, to bring instructional practice and educational theory together, to paraphrase Zora Neale Hurston, ‘formalize curiosity’, i.e., pulling, pushing, poking and prying with a purpose. Through CPED, I have followed and formalized my curiosity. The account that follows focuses on a particular *problem of practice* that was important for me to gain further

understanding of, but is part of a larger, career-long effort that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) call *Inquiry as Stance*.

The CPED design (Latta and Wunder, 2012) provided a formal structure to rigorously analyze my problem of practice (a district mentor program), develop new knowledge, gain a better understanding of the current research in my field, and build relationships with those who share my passion for education. It has helped me build skills to support teachers on their professional journey. My present assignment casts my gaze specifically on new-hires in their first year of teaching in a rapidly growing, well-funded public school district. Creating the space and structures for novice teachers and assigned mentors to become critical colleagues (Lord, 1994) is the vision for the present mentor program. My support of new teachers begins pre-contract and continues for the first year of employment, during which time novice teachers are paired with master teachers as mentors.

Through the support of a district mentor program, mentors and new-hires work together during the first semester of the school year. The mentorship provides professional release time (not always used) for the new-hire and mentor to jointly observe instruction in a classroom in a different building with similar demographics and reflect upon that experience. This experience affords built-in time for reflection. As I will show later one of the successes has been to increase the use of off-site observations.

For both my dissertation and to inform professional acumen, I have had new-hires, mentors, building principals, and district administrators provide feedback about their experiences with the mentor program in the form of surveys, small group meetings, reflections on teaching, and focus interviews that took place before, during, and after the

first semester of the school year. I've engaged in this practice iteratively every year since 2006, but it is the 2013-2015 school years that are focused on later in this dissertation.

This dissertation/mentor program situational awareness study aims to better understand the needs of new-hires, mentors, and principals. Information from this program evaluation has been used to make data-informed changes with the intent of revitalizing the present program to better serve our teachers and our schools.

My district is a rapidly growing, quickly diversifying aggregation of more than 40,000 students with a teaching force reaching retirement age at the same time students are filling our classrooms faster than we can build them. The frustrations of the teaching profession (difficulty finding teachers, large class sizes, numerous preps, etc.) found elsewhere exist in this district too. Still, the district is comparatively successful; even though as it always has more work to do.

Readers will note that I have named my research site. Despite my intent of anonymity, it is easy to determine from where I live, where the problem of practice is that is described in this dissertation. Still, research protocols in place guarantee privacy to individuals. No participant's identity is compromised in this dissertation because protections come not from hiding the locale, but rather from the fact that I have worked with more than 3,500 new-hires and 1,500 mentors over the past ten years in this district. With such a vast number of participants, a reader would not be able to connect people to actions as described in this text, except my own.

Over the past four decades, the shortage of qualified teachers across the nation has been one of the most difficult challenges school leaders face (Carnegie Forum Report, 1986; Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2003; *NY Times*, August 10, 2015). Teacher

attrition emerged as a key concern in the 1980s and 1990s (Hafner & Owings, 1991; Ingersoll, 1997) and became more acute once student achievement was brought to the forefront with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This law required that a “highly qualified” teacher must be in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.

Over a decade ago, Ingersoll (2003) reported teachers leaving the profession at alarming rates: 14% of new teachers departed the profession by the end of their first year; 33% within three years; and nearly 50% exited the profession in five years, especially in communities with high-poverty schools. This meant one out of every two new teachers quit within five years. Recent data show that trends have not improved. A “revolving door” effect has been created due to the combination of more teachers departing the profession before reaching retirement age (Ingersoll & May, 2011) and the increasing numbers of beginning teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey, 2014). Growing and diversifying student enrollments compound the high demand for teachers, as does the growing number of regular teacher retirements.

Keeping new teachers in the profession is just part of the challenge. What is being done to address effective practice of beginning teachers in our schools today? How will school districts ensure the effectiveness of beginning teachers from day one? These are not new questions—during the 1980s school districts across the country began implementing teacher induction and mentor programs to assist beginning teachers. These programs are now more relevant than ever before (based on teacher shortages). If 30 years ago the question was, “What induction programs might we create?” the new

question becomes, “How might we change/revitalize the induction programs we have so they better serve our teachers and our schools?”

A purpose of this study was to formatively evaluate the current state of one large district’s new teacher mentor program. Chapter 1 (this chapter) provides the context for and an introduction to the program’s review. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature relating to the mentoring process for beginning teachers. Chapter 3 describes the research design created to show the number of teachers served as well as the impact of feedback from stakeholders on the structure and implementation of the program. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study about the perceptions of beginning teachers, mentors, and principals. Chapter 5 offers an overview, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research on the topic of mentoring including the next steps in improving practice, teacher quality, and effectiveness for both my district and presumably similarly challenged districts elsewhere.

Attracting and Creating a Quality Teaching Force

Every student deserves a quality teacher who is passionate about the subject they teach and cares deeply for the students with whom they work (Sizer, 1984, Stronge, 2013). One part of this task is to attract the most talented new teachers to the classroom, but a second piece is to help those new teachers become strong through learning and growth, so that *what is possible* in their development becomes *what transpires*.

This transformation of teachers requires creating structures in schools that provide experiences to increase knowledge, build instructional and collaborative skills, and support teachers and ultimately

teacher effectiveness. *The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future* (1996) confirms the importance of teacher effectiveness,

What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what teachers can accomplish. New courses, tests, and curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them productively. Policies can improve schools only if the people in the schools are armed with the knowledge, skills, and supports they need (p. 5).

Creating and implementing policies specific to supporting new-hires might include ensuring new-hires are assigned the fewest number of course preparations and smaller class sizes, that they have mentors, and job-embedded professional development where feedback and reflection focus on the new-hires' learning and growth.

Demands on beginning teachers to be effective from the start become intense. "New teachers have two jobs—they have to teach and they have to learn to teach" (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 126). Mandated accountability testing, class size, curriculum delivery, and increased student diversity contribute to the anxiety and exhaustion most beginning teachers experience. A task then is to keep that anxiety and exhaustion from becoming overwhelming. We need to ask what provisions are in place or can be put into place to support beginning teachers.

In the 1980s, state and local school districts began turning to induction and mentoring programs to assist pre-service teachers with the transition. Using data from

the Schools and Staffing Survey from the 1990–1991 school year to the 1999–2000 school year, Ingersoll and Smith (2004) found the number of new teachers receiving support through induction almost doubled over those 10 years. This dissertation will follow the distinction in turns-of-phrase proposed by Wong.

Numerous studies conducted over the past three decades focusing on different types of programs use the terms *mentoring* and *induction* synonymously (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2008), yet they can describe very different programs.

Induction is a process—a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process—that is organized by a school district to train, support and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a life-long learning program. Mentoring is an action. It is what mentors do. A mentor is a single person, whose basic function is to help a new teacher. A mentor is a component of the induction process (Wong, 2004, p. 42 NATSP).

I will consider how an induction program can, among other things, successfully leverage peer mentoring to support new teachers' entry into the profession.

Theoretical Framework: Reflective Practice

It is a core assumption of the research design used in this study that new and experienced teachers (and your author) can gain insight into *what is*—and how close that is to *what ought to be*—by reflecting on intentions and observed practices and outcomes (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

This level of reflection requires the ability of the new-hires to see themselves as they are, and to make intentional changes to improve. Carol Dweck (2006) describes the growth mindset as “the view you adopt for yourself” and contrasts it with a “fixed mindset.” “Stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it’s not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset. This is the mindset that allows people to thrive during the most challenging times in their lives” (p. 7). Reflective practice by mentors and beginning teachers provides the means for developing a “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2006), improving professional competencies through a teacher appraisal process (Danielson, 2013), and building collegial relationships (Wenger, 1998) where critical feedback (Lord, 1994) propels beginning teacher effectiveness (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The daily practice of reflection is considered essential teacher behavior) by educational researchers and teacher educators alike (Boody, 2008; Dewey, 1933; Kelly, 2002; Langle & Senne, 1997; Zeichner & Liu, 2010. Often acknowledged as the key education theorist of the 20th century, Dewey (1933, p. 17) considered the concept of reflection “to be a special form of problem solving; thinking to resolve an issue involving active engagement and critical analysis using self-understanding, heightened consciousness, and emancipatory learning.”

In contrast, non-reflective practice is more akin to “following orders.” With this logic, what teachers should do would not change on a moment-to-moment basis in response to student needs or expressed interest. Non-reflective practice assumes teachers neither use nor need judgment or discretion. Fortunately, there is not a large constituency

advocating against teacher reflection, but being for reflection does not equate to seeing all reflection as equal or as equally effective. As Dewey implied, for the work of reflection to serve the interests of students, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders, it needs to be pursued thoughtfully. A task of both induction and mentoring is to help new teachers develop and hone such capabilities.

Being free to learn and grow is essential for beginning teachers. Creating a culture of learning with a growth mindset (Dweck, 2012) encourages teachers to accept critical feedback from colleagues and appraisers. A growth mindset capitalizes on mistakes, making learning the central objective to improvement of instruction. Supporting beginning teachers requires the work of teachers, principals, and district officials. Mentors with a growth mindset, serving as critical colleagues (Lord, 1994), modeling the importance of reflective practice (Latta & Wunder, 2012), and engaging beginning teachers in critical conversations help those beginning teachers manage the complexities of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

As this dissertation will show, to assist them in processing feedback, beginning teachers benefit from opportunities to practice the language of teaching (Cazden, 1988) with a mentor before participating with their appraiser. Helping beginning teachers make the connections between teacher appraisal for growth, the professional goals they have set for themselves, and the way beginning teachers plan for and deliver instruction for efficacy and leadership. The benefits of experienced teachers modeling for beginning teachers, welcoming these new colleagues to the profession, and supporting them in the classroom become self-sustaining once the beginning teachers gain experience, succeed

in their classrooms, and then mentor another beginning teacher, thus continuing the cycle of learning and induction.

The use of frameworks defining and describing excellence in teacher appraisal rubrics produce powerful side effects (Marzano, 2013). Operating from a growth mindset, a framework for teaching offers a structure for teachers to assess their own practice and organize improvement efforts. When novice teachers meet with mentors or when experienced teachers consult with coaches or supervisors, they need a framework to determine those aspects of teaching that require their attention. Without a framework, the focus of the conversation is limited to the knowledge the instructional coach. With a framework, instructional conversations are organized by themes and common language around the complexity of teaching is developed. Teachers learn and grow with a framework for teaching. Rich conversations focus on improving efforts within the context of shared definitions and understandings.

Teachers learn and grow through reflective practice, from instructional frameworks that provide language to guide instructional conversations, and by seeking new strategies and input from others. In order for instructional conversations to impact practice,

Teachers need opportunities to voice and share doubts and frustrations as well as successes and exemplars. They need to ask questions about their own teaching and about their colleagues' teaching. They need to recognize that these questions and how they and their colleagues go about raising them, addressing them, and on occasion even

answering them constitute the major focus of professional development (Lord, 1994, p. 183).

Critical colleagueship requires high levels of institutional trust (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). In environments where high levels of institutional trust are present, critical colleagueship provides support for greater reflectiveness and sustained learning as colleagues push and pull each other to think more deeply and in new and different ways about teaching and learning. True learning is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Latta, 2011; Lord, 1994). Beginning teachers undergo an identity transformation at the time they join the teaching profession, becoming who they are based upon social interactions in practice (Wenger, 1998, p. 215). Critical colleagueship is essential to growth for both beginning and experienced teachers. I share all of this to illustrate that my design of teacher induction is for LPS is informed by the literature (which I will further show in Chapter 2).

Problem of Practice

My present assignment began in 2006 with half my focus (.50 FTE) on beginning teachers and the district mentor program. Upon learning what that portion of the assignment required, I looked toward a doctoral program that would provide the formal structure to analyze my problem of practice, develop new knowledge, gain a better understanding of the current research in my field, build relationships with those sharing my passion for education, and earn a doctoral degree at the same time. CPED provides this formal structure. CPED is built upon opportunities for sustained dialogue with “critical friends” (Latta & Wunder, 2012, p. 271) and faculty, thus increasing one’s

capacity as a leader and allowing one to develop the language needed to insert myself into the educational leadership landscape.

Building a community of advanced practitioners aspiring to lead the improvement of educational practices is the intent of the cohort design, and was the greatest draw to the program for me. In my district, policy and practice directly impact the creation of professional development opportunities for both beginning teachers and their mentors. Beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district officials respond to identified needs and areas of growth with the intent of informing a practitioner's continuous cycle of improvement. The results from this study should contribute to current research on the mentoring process and assist education reformers and policy makers in determining crucial elements of mentoring.

A purpose of this study is to gather information relating to a formal mentoring process for purposes of review and improvement. This stems from a range of inter-related reasons. The number of new teachers leaving the field is high. Ultimately this adds to the expense of new teacher preparation, with more teachers needing training to account for attrition. Student learning suffers because under-supported novice teachers are not able to survive in the classroom or they do survive in the classroom and do a mediocre job.

It seems logical that while all new teachers face steep learning curves, the better the mentor experience, the faster teachers perform at high levels, and missteps are less likely. However, what counts as good induction practice is a work in progress involving not just beginning teachers but also mentors, colleagues, building administrators, and district officials. My challenge then, consistent with design research (Design-Based

Research Collective, 2003), is to collect and synthesize data about current practices experienced by various stakeholders input to then improve processes and outcomes.

As the professional development specialist crafting the new-hire experience for the district, thoughtful and informed decisions require the dance of the dialectic between policy and practice. Deepening the understanding of an existing mentor program in a large school district in an effort to make improvements to the local program is the task of the research practitioner. Involving all stakeholders (district administrators, building principals, new-hires and mentors) creates buy-in, necessary when inquiring about how various stakeholders experience the induction process, and when soliciting their recommendations for improvement. Transparency and consistency in messaging, making sure all stakeholders understand the purpose for data collection and analysis, (the “Why we are doing this?” and, “Why we are doing this, this way?”) are critical to the successful implementation of an effective program (Garmston and Wellman, 2013).

Starting to systematically collect data in 2011, (i.e., before deciding it would be part of a dissertation), I was and remain a practitioner engaging in steps to better understand my problem of practice. I found a district committed to providing excellent professional development opportunities to teachers. Since 2009, the district has contracted with Adaptive Schools agency trainers (Garmston and Wellman, 2013) offering more than 15, four-day sessions on the topic of developing collective identities and capacities as collaborators, inquirers, and leaders. *Classroom Instruction That Works* (Pitler and Stone, 2012) has been offered since the first edition came out fifteen years ago. *Explicit Instruction*, the work of Anita Archer and Charles Hughes (2011) has been offered for the past

three years, with Anita Archer facilitating the workshop. Teachers have the option of registering for the workshop as a salary advancement course. Salary advancement credit is earned upon completion of the course requirements. Funding for professional development was and is provided by district budget allocations and grants.

From 1998 to 2008, half-day Harry Wong workshops were offered for new teachers to the district. In my first annual cycle as Professional Development Specialist, I followed the script organized by the previous administrator, forming a team of 10 teachers to facilitate *Harry Wong: The First Days of School* (1998) classes for first-year teachers in August of 2006. Two hundred forty new teachers participated in the sessions. The facilitators were volunteer, tenured instructional leaders from the district. All of the teachers had facilitated these sessions for more than five years.

The *Lincoln Public Schools Mentor Program* began in 1999. As part of the Nebraska Mentor Teacher Program grant, funding was provided to support first-year public school teachers. In conjunction with the Nebraska Mentor Teacher Program Grant, Lincoln's Emerging Educators Program (LEEP), welcomed new teachers to LPS, based on the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Each year, building principals chose teachers considered instructional leaders, who were recommended by the professional development office. Those leaders were provided training to mentor new teachers to the district. Because of the transition of leadership and re-evaluation of the mentor program during the 2006-2007 school year, mentor training was not available. It was difficult to get mentors to participate at the district level those

first few years. They would often say they could be available to support their new colleague, but they did not want to do the paper work that went along with the program.

To move an imperiled program of incredible potential, it is necessary to bring instructional practice and educational theory together. Formalizing curiosity—pulling, pushing, poking, and prying with a purpose—allows us to learn how the induction program experience as reported by all stakeholders can inform the betterment of the program. Through close collaboration with teachers, mentors, principals, and district administrators, I am able to adapt the local program to changing the educational landscapes, thus creating supportive structures where beginning teachers not only survive, but thrive in their first year of teaching.

Organization of Chapters

Monitoring and adapting are essential to improving program quality and effectiveness in the effort to better serve students, teachers, and schools; to illustrate the program's value to decision-makers and funders; and to make evidence-based decisions (New Teacher Center, 2011). The research design at the base of this project is built upon the recommendations of the New Teacher Center (NTC) Impact Spectrum (see Chapter 2). The three steps recommended in creating a data-gathering plan include: identify purpose and data to collect; collect data; and analyze and reflect on these data. The NTC Impact Spectrum divides potential data sources into two categories: Data of Implementation and Data of Impact.

Implementation data provide demographic information on the teachers being served (new-hires and mentors) and the school culture in which they work. Implementation data can also provide a picture of how well the program is supported

(e.g., well-defined roles and levels of engagement of all stakeholders; guarded time for training, planning, and reflecting; numbers of participating new-hires; mentor case load; etc.).

Impact data measure the effect that an induction program has on the district as a system. The experiences of students, new teachers, mentors, principals, and district administrators provide insight into whether the program is successful in supporting student achievement, teacher professional growth, school culture, and the districts' commitment to making the induction experience a priority. It is in this area of the NTC Impact Spectrum where,

Efforts to design, use, and do research on educational tools and materials in real settings can promote the adoption of innovations. They can help researchers and designers understand the real world demands placed on designs [*the expectations of the district's mentor program*] and adopters [*new teachers, mentors, and principals*] of designs. In addition, pursuing development and enactment through close collaboration with teachers places them in direct ownership of designs" (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 8, italics original).

Types of data sources across the NTC Impact Spectrum were chosen for the purpose of exploring how various stakeholders experienced the induction process and, if participants found the mentor program helpful or wanting, to include surveys, new teacher reflections, and focus interviews with principals. New-hires and mentors

received three multi-item electronic surveys based on the SRI International Report *Examining the Effects of New Teacher Induction* (2010). These surveys and other methodological steps are further detailed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 presents data and findings in the same chronological order it was gathered following the Integrative Learning Design (ILD) model, demonstrating a continuous cycle of data gathering, adaptations, and new iterations. The three questions guiding this research are addressed in the second part the chapter were:

1. What was the typical experience of a new-hire in a rapidly growing district?
2. How efficacious did new-hires feel?
3. How satisfied were new-hires, mentors, and principals with the support provided by the district?

Data gathered to inform these guiding questions include a review of archives, two new-hire surveys, one mentor survey, new-hire reflections and one-on-one principal interviews.

True to the continuous improvement nature of the ILD, the organization and integration of data informed the next iteration of this particular program, and is showcased in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 1 provided the introduction to a scholarly practitioner's problem of practice, to supporting teachers in their first year, and to the research design created to evaluate a mentoring program for the district. This chapter focuses on what the research literature says about attributes of teacher quality, effective instruction, and the mentoring process for new teachers. The purposes of this literature review are to describe what is already known about teacher quality; to provide a framework to support the effective instruction, reflective practice, and teacher appraisal; and to define critical collegueship. Some of the reviewed studies here are empirical, but many of them are examples of synthesized professional development literature that, while undergirded by empirical evidence, reflects the grounding within which contemporary professional development—including new teacher induction—typically takes place. Proving my familiarity with “what the literature says” includes examining these lists of recommended practices because they shape both the design of the program I inherited and how I have adapted the program to better model effective instruction, all in an effort to better meet the needs of teachers and mentors. One could argue this description of the theoretical model fits into Chapter 4 (because it describes the orientation of the program I have supported so it is part of the design implementation), but I have kept it here to emphasize that the design comes from the professional literature. In turn, in Chapter 4, I provide a more explicit description of the specific program—implemented in a specific place, at a particular time—rather than describing it in the overarching manner I use here.

Teacher Quality Matters

Every student deserves a quality teacher passionate about what they teach, who cares deeply for the students with whom they work (Stronge, 2010). Most students have had at least one teacher who will always be remembered as *the* teacher who never gave up and who understood them on a personal level, the special place where students, teachers, and content come together (Hawkins, 1974). Some students have had the fortune of more than one outstanding teacher who engaged learners by creating experiences that made students want to be in school, thus transforming lives. Tucker and Stronge (2005) discuss the “transformative power” of effective teachers and their impact on student trajectory by “inspiring us to play with ideas, think deeply about the subject matter, take on more challenging work, and even pursuing careers in a particular field of study” (p. 1).

Preparing students for careers and training the workforce of the future is a key interest at both the state and national level. In most states, certification requirements support the importance of highly-qualified teachers. Nebraska education jurisprudence states, “The state has a compelling interest in the quality and ability of those who are employed to teach its young people” (LB 802, § 22.1988). This was the legal foundation of this mentor program. More recently, LB 4945 (2015) commits the Nebraska State Board of Education to developing guidelines for mentor teacher programs in local systems to provide ongoing support for individuals entering the profession. Experienced teachers who model a love of learning impact not only the students to whom they are assigned, but also have an impact on the culture of the learning environment in which they work, as well as the novice teachers who work with them (Sarason, 1982).

Whereas factors such as a guaranteed and viable curriculum, class size, funding, and family and community involvement are cited as factors influencing student achievement, the single most important school-related factor is the quality of the classroom teacher (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Marzano, 2003; Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn & Sanders 1997). While there are many factors outside of school more predictive of student educational success than factors inside of school (Berliner & Glass, 2014), the inside of school factors are the factors over which school administrators have the most control and, in turn, the most impact.

Teacher quality and effectiveness are critical attributes for student learning. Initial findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project (2010) states, “For four decades, educational researchers have confirmed that many parents know: children’s academic progress heavily depends on the talent and skill of the teacher leading their classroom.” Tucker and Stronge look at the classroom teacher experience from a cumulative perspective rather than one grade at a time and report, “Not only does teacher *quality* matter when it comes to how many students learn, but also, for better or worse, a teacher’s *effectiveness* stays with students for years to come” (p. 5, italics original).

Similar findings by Allington and Johnson (2000) in a post hoc analysis of achievement found gains made by students taught by exemplary teachers outpaced expected levels of growth. Therefore, teacher effectiveness has a life-altering impact on student learning and achievement. “Without effective teachers neither our schools as a whole, nor our students individually and collectively, can experience the gains and improvement we desire” (Strong, 2013, p. 29).

Effectively engaging students and raising student achievement become challenging tasks for the most experienced and savvy teachers. For beginning teachers, the level of responsibility can be daunting. Knowing that, “beginning teachers, on average, are less effective than experienced teachers” (Hanushek, Kain, O’Brien & Rivkin, 2005, p. 17), support in the first few years of teaching is critical for the growth and development of beginning teachers and their students.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, “New teachers have two jobs—they have to teach and they have to learn to teach” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 126). Experienced teachers are expected by most to be more effective than beginning teachers. Effective teachers are able to predict, based on previous experience with the curriculum and students, where and when students will need support. Effective teachers possess the ability to deliver information in a variety of ways—matching learning preferences and interests—all the while building relationships with students. Saunders (2002) describes the combination of intuition and expertise in teaching as,

a hugely complex and skilled activity. It is simultaneously both a science and an art – it requires scholarship, rigorous critical inquiry, collective creation of educational knowledge according to collegial and communal norms, and it requires intuition, imagination, improvisation: all those spur-of-the-moment, not-to-be predicted, instinctive and idiosyncratic decisions that more than one commentator has likened to a performance art (p. 6).

Teaching is complex; the jump from pre-service to in-service is enormous. The *Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers* (2011) reports,

“Students of beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests” (p. 225). Beginning teacher assignments can be challenging; new teachers often receive the most difficult student populations, and heavy course loads, including many different courses to prepare for (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 47). When we consider teacher assignments, it is important to understand, “the students who need the strongest instruction often are taught by teachers with the least experience and expertise” (Rothman, 2008, p. 2).

Through an exhaustive review, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) identified 15 studies dating back to the mid-1980s of empirical research evaluating the effects of induction beginning with leading researchers in the field, analysts in state governmental agencies, online databases, and reviews of existing research. After finding over 500 documents, only fifteen studies met the criteria for quality and, with the “intent of providing researchers, policy makers, and educators with a reliable and current assessment of what is known, and not known, about the effectiveness of teacher induction and mentoring programs,” the authors included only empirical studies that provided evidence of “effects on induction programs on teachers or their students, and compared the outcome data from both participants and non-participants in induction components, activities or programs” (p. 8).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that even though all of the studies reviewed had limitations of one sort or another, the evidence was clear that, “almost all teachers who participate in some kind of induction had higher satisfaction, commitment, or retention, performed better at various aspects of teaching” (p. 225). This meant keeping students on task, planning and preparation, effective questioning practices, building a

culture of learning and rapport, and classroom management. Most importantly, “beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests” (p. 225).

Over the years, researchers have tried to measure teacher effectiveness with varying degrees of success. Early empirical studies, using cross-sectional analysis where cohorts of teachers were compared with other cohort groups with differing levels of experience were not really getting at individual teachers and effectiveness. The number of years in a classroom does not correlate to all teachers improving their craft over time nor does it correlate to ineffective teachers somehow becoming effective (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Recent advances in technology and data collection methodology, where research methods and data systems match student data with individual teachers, are more accurately describing teacher growth and effectiveness. Tracking a teacher’s effectiveness over time, comparing effectiveness from his or her “prior” self to “present” self, is a research method called “teacher fixed effects.” In *Does Teaching Experience Increase Teacher Effectiveness* (Kini & Podolsky, 2016, p. 2), a research brief published by the Learning Policy Institute, a graphic organizer comparing “cross-sectional analysis” and “teacher fixed effects” (on the following page) more clearly defines the difference between the two methodologies, and champions teacher fixed effect studies.

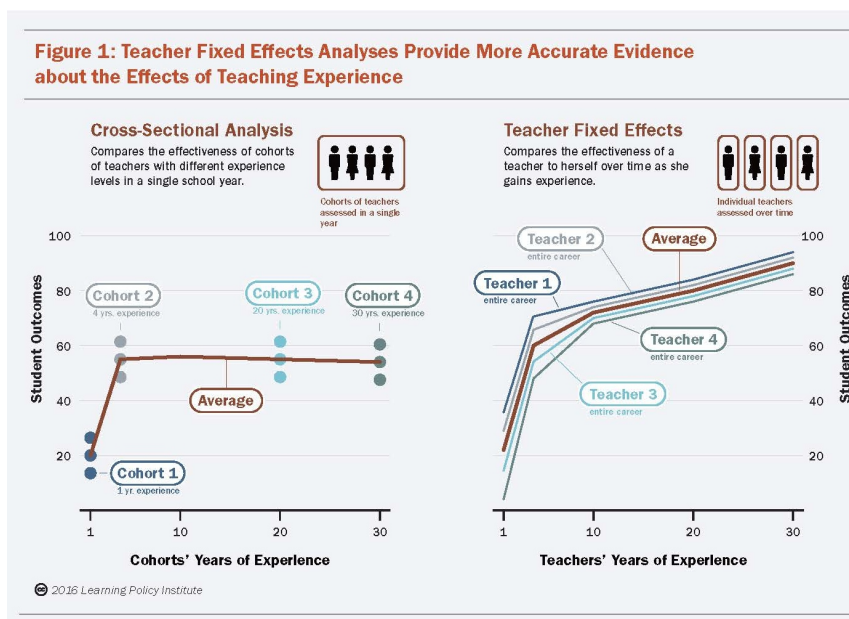


Figure 2.1. Pictograph Contrasting Cross-Sectional Analyses and Teacher Fixed Effects

Fixed effects methodology is spilling over (Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009) into other areas where researchers use different models to measure gains in experience, (e.g., student fixed effects; school fixed effects; and student and teacher fixed effects). Research (Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, and Rivkin, 2005) implementing student fixed effects “in an attempt to control for past individual, family, and school factors and permits concentration on the contemporaneous circumstances that are generally measured along with student achievement” (p. 2) found “relative to teachers with 6+ years of experience, teachers in their first year performed significantly worse, and that teachers in their fourth year of teaching performed significantly better” (p. 17). In this 2005 study, the dependent variable was gain scores. Three models were used to measure gains to experience: one with no fixed effects, one with student fixed effects, and a model with student and teacher fixed effects. Kini and Podolsky (2016) caution that, “While student fixed effects analysis can be beneficial for investigating some relationships, this method

can bias estimates of returns to teaching experience because it restricts the comparison group” (p. 9).

The use of teacher and student fixed effects to analyze the effects of teaching experience on student outcomes in elementary and secondary schools in the United States was the focus of the research review, *Does Teaching Experience Increase Teacher Effectiveness?* (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Methodological considerations included peer-review processes in place since 2003 for inclusion in the review (which means practically all of the studies examined occurred during the No Child Left Behind/Standards-based accountability era). The authors came to four key conclusions in their review of empirical research on teacher effectiveness:

1. Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher’s career. Gains in teacher effectiveness associated with experience are most steep in teachers’ initial years, but continue to be significant as teachers reach the successive decades of their careers.
2. As teachers gain experience, their students not only learn more, as measured by standardized tests, they are also more likely to do better on other measures of success, such as school attendance.
3. Teachers’ effectiveness increases at a greater rate when they teach in a supportive and collegial working environment, and when they accumulate experience in the same grade level, subject, or district.

4. More experienced teachers support greater student learning for their colleagues and the school as a whole, as well as for their own students (p. 1).

These findings support considerable investment in mentor and induction programs by leveraging the importance of peer relationships in creating an environment for learning.

Teacher career phases have been studied extensively, highlighting that teachers pass through various stages throughout their careers (Day, 2004; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1989). Used to describe the work of teachers adjusting to new mathematics standards, Heaton (2000) uses “relearning the dance” as a metaphor, which also works when describing new teachers who are “learning the dance” for the first time. Teachers in the early stages of their careers dance with a fear of not knowing the right dance steps or of getting the dance steps out of order—perhaps dancing to the wrong song without the efficacy to change the music. Mid-career teachers find themselves in a different dance hall, comfortable with the music and dance moves, looking for ways to add their special touches with new dance moves, perhaps exploring different types of music. Late-career teachers are very comfortable with their dance hall, role as DJ, and dance instructor. Meeting the professional development needs of all teachers across the teacher life cycle is essential. Mid- and late-career teachers often possess talent and expertise, gained from classroom experiences that can be valuable resources for early-career teachers if successfully harnessed.

Sharon Feiman-Nemser posits a learning-to-teach continuum that considers “the needs of teachers at different stages in their learning career including a unique agenda shaped by the requirements of good teaching, and by where teachers are in their

professional development” (2001, p. 1015). The continuum for learning is an expanded view of professional practice including teachers working together for educational change. Experienced teachers have the opportunity to mold and shape beginning teachers, helping them find their voice, modeling the importance of continuous learning to make informed classroom decisions, efficaciously inserting themselves into conversations to impact policy and practice. Professional development responsive to the needs of teachers at all stages of the continuum supports teaching, creating a culture of continuous learning for all stakeholders at both the building and district levels.

Unless teachers have access to serious and sustained learning opportunities at every stage in their career, they are unlikely to teach in ways meeting demanding new standards for student learning or to participate in the solution of educational problems (Ball & Cohen, 1999). Meeting demanding new standards is more of a goal than a strategy or a process however. For new teacher to grow and ultimately achieve that goal requires development of complex, reasoned thinking. Aristotle called the understanding, knowledge, and a capacity for and disposition to engage in practical reasoning *phronesis* (Day, 2004, p. 87). For the purpose of this inquiry, the focus is the experience of beginning teachers, but it is worth noting that the experienced mentor teachers who work with the new teachers learn/gain something from their mentoring. *Phronesis* applies to both mentor and mentee.

Beginning Teacher Professional Development

Teaching teachers is described as one of the most demanding kinds of professional preparation. “Teacher educators must constantly model practices; construct powerful learning experiences; thoughtfully support progress, understanding, and

practice; carefully assess students; progress and understandings; and help link theory and practice” (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Schulman, 2005, p. 441). Teachers with classroom experience rely on interactions with students and curricula when linking theory and practice. For beginning teachers, professional development scaffolds include creating an experience for beginning teachers, followed by processing the experience and determining next steps to continue the cycle of learning and growth. Through sustained professional development from pre-service teaching programs to educational leadership training, teachers reach high levels of efficacy, search to find better ways to reach and teach students, and seek opportunities to achieve mastery of their content area (Day, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Professional development as defined by Learning Forward, “the only professional organization devoted exclusively to those who work in educator professional development” (<http://learningforward.org>, September 2016), is “a comprehensive sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement.” This new definition was created for use in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), and includes a list of detailed descriptors advocating for a comprehensive, sustained program design. The difference between how the law is written and how professional development is implemented will be greatly influenced by the placement of the phrase “may include” in the legislation. Learning Forward Executive Director, Stephanie Hirsh blogged in response to the passage of ESSA, that the new law is a good start on defining professional development though, “we believe that effective professional learning requires more than what the law describes” (<http://learningforward.org>, May 2016).

ESSA does not mention teacher life cycle, professional development needs at specific times in the cycle, nor specific programs. The insertion of the phrase “may include” does not secure but rather suggests or recommends activities or experiences. For beginning teachers, professional development is often considered an induction or mentoring program, specific to the start of a teacher’s career or place on the continuum.

In the early stages of teaching careers, beginning teachers strive for acceptance and respect. So their early professional development experiences should be thoughtful and intentionally planned experiences, building a culture of learning for beginning teachers. Although commonly used interchangeably, the words induction and mentoring have considerably different meanings. *Induction* references a program, series of events, or experiences that support beginning teachers, and acclimate them to the profession. A *mentoring* program is more specific. It matches a beginning teacher with an experienced teacher, providing one-on-one coaching. The graphic on the following page illustrates professional development as the foundation of an induction program. Inside the induction program container live the experiences and events an induction program might offer. Specific to the beginning teacher experience that is showcased in later chapters are the experiences new-hires in this district share. New teacher orientation is a week-long event that includes laptop distribution, a district sponsored welcome breakfast, the mentor program, and tenure courses. Throughout all of these experiences, the common thread grounding conversations is the district instructional framework and the appraisal domains.

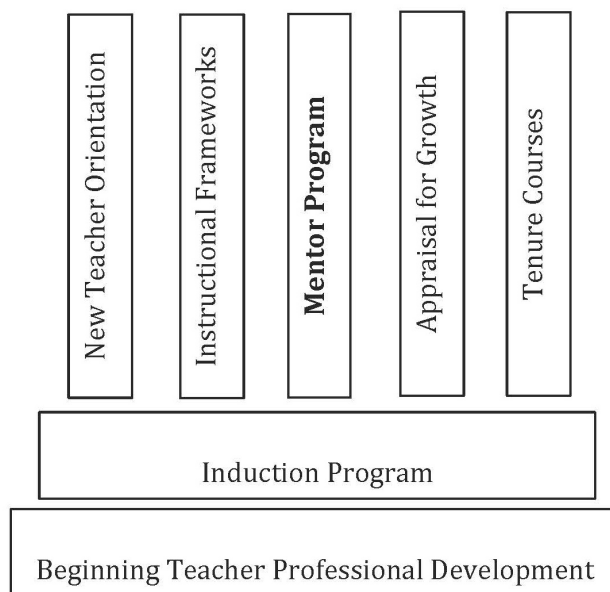


Figure 2.2. Components of LPS Beginning Teacher Professional Development

A major policy initiative of education reformers in the 1980s called attention to the challenges encountered by those new to teaching. Those induction programs were the creation of states and local education agencies intending to retain new teachers in the profession and more broadly help teachers advance throughout their careers to become expert teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Educational induction programs are comprehensive, multi-year processes designed to train and acculturate new teachers in the academic standards and vision of a district. Designed to meet the unique needs of a school or district, induction programs usually reflect the culture of the district.

Prior to entering the arena of education, induction programs were commonly known for assisting employees in the transition to a new occupation. Traditionally, teaching has been a solitary endeavor. Teachers might work closely with students but close their doors to colleagues (Sizer, 1984). Educational induction programs are a way

to create strong collegial relationships and provide timely professional development experiences, supporting a culture of learning and the mission of the school and district. Pre-service teacher preparation cannot provide all of the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the classroom, and much of the learning can only happen on the job (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

After accepting first assignments, new teachers too often struggle by trying to figure everything out on their own: curriculum, classroom management, building culture, district culture, and so forth. The “lost at sea” mentality, as described by Johnson (1990), also referred to as “sink or swim” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003), is not what educational leaders want for new-hires nor their students. For some new-to-the-profession teachers, the assignment is an extremely challenging one because of difficult classrooms or an excessive number of courses for which to prepare. Lortie (1975) and Sizer (1992) take the experience even further calling it a “trial by fire.”

Many districts turn to induction programs to support beginning teachers. Induction studies reviewed by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) report “empirical support for the claim that induction for beginning teachers and teacher mentoring programs in particular have a positive impact” on teaching and learning (p. 225). The authors also found that the context in which the program is being implemented, the content of the induction experience, its length and program requirements, and financial implications, are relevant considerations when considering program effectiveness.

Researchers examining induction programs across the United States and abroad find, “Induction programs can consist of a wide-range of activities including orientation seminars and workshops, formal systems for support and evaluation by experienced

teachers or administrators, and assistance on the more pressing problem of the day from the teacher down the hall” (Smith, Desimone, Porter, McGraner & Taylor Haynes, 2012). The over-arching goals of these support programs are to improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers. Carefully crafted professional development experiences, created to encourage teacher reflection, socialization, identity formation, and self-assessment in the teacher evaluation process become critical to the growth and development of beginning teachers.

Considered one of the most well-developed induction programs (Strong, 2009), the New Teacher Center (NTC) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers and school leaders (<http://www.newteachercenter.org/about-ntc>, September 9, 2016). Founded by teachers in 1998, NTC is dedicated to improving student learning by guiding a new generation of educators. Working with school districts, state policy makers, and educators across the country to increase the effectiveness of teachers and school leaders at all levels, these programs are built upon research-based principles for teacher onboarding, mentoring, and ongoing coaching—they are proven to accelerate teacher effectiveness, reduce teacher turn over, and improve student achievement. Since its inception, almost seven million students have had the opportunity to learn from the nearly 100,000 teachers who have gone through the NTC Teacher Induction Program. These students and teachers were trained and supported by over 25,000 NTC mentors and coaches in districts throughout all 50 states. The NTC reports that (<https://newteachercenter.org/our-impact/#>, May, 2016):

- students in classrooms with teachers supported by the NTC induction program accelerated their learning in math and reading above students who were in classrooms with teachers supported by a traditional induction program;
- eighty-eight percent of teachers enrolled in the NTC Induction Program report a direct impact on student achievement as a result of their mentor relationship;
- NTC-supported teachers demonstrate a higher capacity for analyzing student work and adjust their teaching practice accordingly;
- when new teachers had strong support from school administrators as well as the other teachers, they were 3–4 more times likely to remain in their school district.

The mission of NTC is to overcome challenges students and teachers face by providing educators with the support and resources necessary to succeed from their first day to their last. The focus of NTC is on teachers, acknowledging that, when teachers succeed, students also succeed. The NTC program started with six goals to develop teacher capacity;

- to direct support toward improving student achievement;
- to use formative assessment practices to guide support;
- to document professional growth over time;
- to model and encourage on-going self-assessment and reflection;
- to foster collaboration and leadership among teachers.

NTC developed Induction Program Standards (IPS), with these six goals as their central mission. Over the next 13 years, they collaborated with state agencies, school districts, policy-making organizations, and a range of educational institutions to define the characteristics and fundamental elements of high-quality induction programs. According to those standards (NTC, 2011):

A comprehensive teacher induction program is part of a larger system of teacher development, support, and accountability. Effective programs are led by capable, well-informed, and adequately resourced leaders who have institutional buy-in, and support. New teachers work collaboratively with a skilled, knowledgeable, and well-trained instructional mentor who has sufficient time to tailor support to each individual teacher's developmental needs. A range of professional development opportunities, a collaborative learning community, and engaged principals/site administrators provide the optimum conditions for each new teacher's success. Standards-based, formative assessment of teacher's practice guides the mentor's work and the new teacher's development. Quality instruction, student learning, equity, and universal access are at the core of mentor-new teacher engagements. Data of program implementation and impact are

thoughtfully and continually collected and analyzed to inform program refinement (p. 6).

The NTC mission of supporting all teachers “from their first day to their last” has grown significantly in the past thirty years.

The design of the IPS, “provides program leaders, policy makers, and researchers with an aspirational framework for program design, implementation, and evaluation in a cycle of continuous improvement, highlighting the importance of ongoing program assessment and accountability, informed by data of implementation and impact” (NTC, 2012). The standards divide into three programmatic themes: foundational, structural, and instructional.

The foundational standards form the basic platform of program design, implementation, administration, and growth. Structural standards describe four essential program components: mentors providing focused instructional assistance to beginning teachers preparation and development; preparation, development, and support for those mentors; a collaborative system of formative assessment for beginning teachers; and targeted differentiated professional learning opportunities for beginning teachers. Instructional standards focus on the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions critical for beginning teachers to develop in their first three years of practice. The ten components embedded in the three programmatic themes include:

- program vision, goals and institutional commitment;
- program administration and communication;
- principal engagement;

- program assessment, evaluation, and accountability;
- mentor roles and responsibilities, selection, assignment, and assessment;
- mentor professional development and learning communities;
- assessing beginning teacher practice;
- beginning teacher professional development and learning communities;
- focus on instructional practice;
- focus on equity and universal access (p. 7).

Each of these standards subdivides into two basic components. The first is a key element, clarifying each standard, further defined by describing four to six aspects unique to the standard. The second component consists of reflective questions intended for use by program leaders in program evaluation when considering how a specific standard is being implemented. The reflective nature of the IPS models reflective practice for beginning teachers. Questions such as, “How do we align and provide continuity from teacher preparation to recruitment and initial hire through the first years of teaching and on through advanced levels of practice?” or “What systems do we have or can we create to help mentors and beginning teachers use professional teaching standards as they reflect upon and assess teaching practice and student learning?” (NTCIPS, 2011. p. 6) can guide program planning and implementation, and the impact of induction programs.

The strong commitment to mentor development is explicitly represented in two of the ten induction program standards: mentor roles and responsibilities; selection, assignment, and assessment; and, mentor professional development and learning communities. Instructional mentors, at the core, wrap around new teachers and students in the New Teacher Center Program Theory of Action Diagram (see below). The NTC

champions beginning teachers, calling for induction programs with “carefully selected, released mentors; systemic approach; strong site leaders, engaged stakeholders; and, supportive context for teaching and learning as conditions for success” (NTC, 2012).

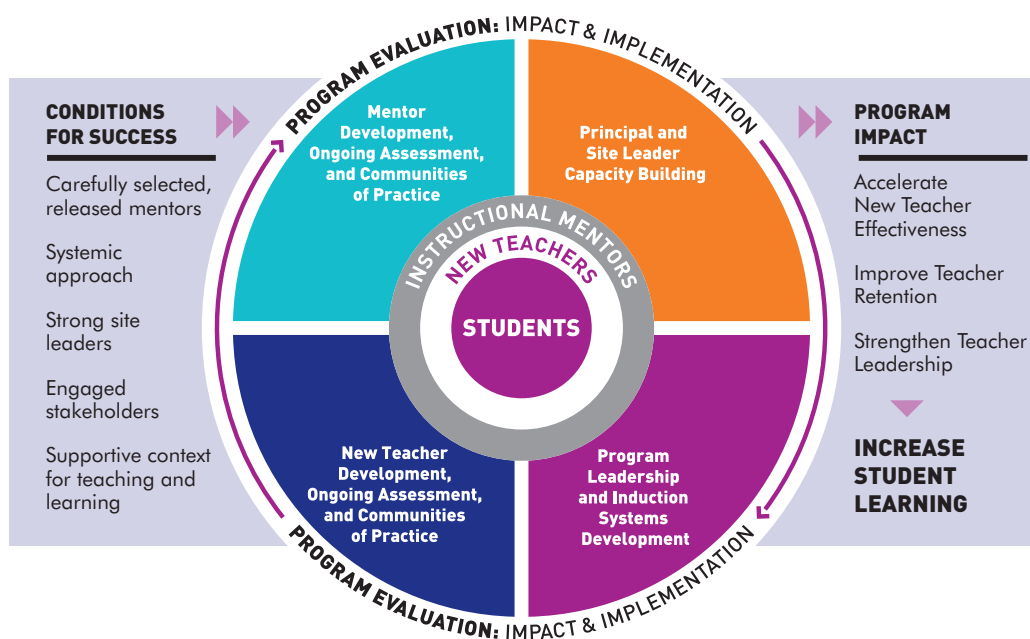


Figure 2.3. © 2016 New Teacher Center Theory of Action

Mentoring

Homer’s *Odyssey* provides the term “mentor.” Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, fights in the Trojan War, entrusting the care of his house and family to Mentor, who serves as a teacher and care provider for Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Over time, the word *mentor* evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, or wise person and lost its capitalization. Shea (1997) describes mentoring as “a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy, and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person” (Shea, Gordon F., 1997, *Mentoring Rev. Ed.*, Menlo Park, CA).

Educational mentoring programs allow and encourage beginning teachers to grow and change as they gain experience, practicing their craft in a supportive environment. A mentor, with the support of a structured program, can guide beginning teachers through challenging times and celebrate successes. Portner (2008) describes the role of mentor as the person helping a beginning teacher develop the capacity and confidence to make his or her own informed decisions, enrich his or her own knowledge, and sharpen his or her own abilities regarding teaching and learning. Effective mentors serve in a coaching role. Support for mentors ranges from an introduction to the teacher next door to extensive training in instructional coaching and release time so the professional development experience is embedded into the beginning teacher's regular school day.

In the report, *Examining the Effects of New Teacher Induction* (2010) induction programs that focus on the work of mentors by implementing stringent mentor requirement selection, training and ongoing support, and accountability for the mentoring process, had two positive outcomes. The first outcome was a better planned and implemented mentoring experience with a stronger focus on instruction for beginning teachers with mentors. The second confirmed that school-wide efforts, such as mentoring programs as part of larger induction programs that were the collective responsibility of a school faculty, had the greatest impact on teacher learning and student achievement.

Reflective Practice

According to the literature (to be described), reflective practice encapsulates teacher evaluation for growth, instructional frameworks, critical colleagues, and problems of practice. Reflective practice is at the very root of the teacher appraisal process—the most important factor in teacher growth. Instructional frameworks provide the language necessary for self-assessment and reflective practice. Critical colleagues push and pull each other to better their craft, asking difficult questions while seeking solutions to challenging problems of practice.

Philosopher John Dewey (1933) explored the concept of reflection. He described it as a process that begins when one looks to his or her own experiences and relevant knowledge to find meaning in his or her own beliefs. For teachers, Dewey (1916) believed reflective practice was critical to becoming intentional and thoughtful, and through reflective practice, teachers would continue to grow. Critical self-assessment makes reflection part of one's daily practice. When reflecting upon successes and failures, beginning teachers are able to determine next steps, improving their instruction and content knowledge in the process.

When beginning teachers start their careers they often cling to the few strategies they know (Day, 2004; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Darling Hammond & Bransford, 2007; Reeves, 2010). Beginning teachers may or may not have the courage to abandon ineffective strategies or find new strategies to improve their teaching style as well as match the needs of the learner. Reeves' discovery (2010) that novice teachers begin with an appreciation of scripted curricula posits the novice teacher searches for “an external expert” or “more knowledgeable peer” in the beginning stages of learning to teach.

“Development of adaptive expertise or conceptual map for teaching requires a teaching and learning space that incites teachers to inquire and improvise, to reason about instruction” (Reeves, p. 245). Moving beginning teachers to a level of praxis that is intentional, situational, and thoughtful only happens through processing experiences. “Embracing reflection, not just as an internal search, it is the capacity to attend to other ideas, work with other educators, and bring new ideas and information back to inform their own practice is practical wisdom: phronesis” (Latta, class notes, Summer 2011).

Dewey’s philosophical foundation (1904) asserted that adults do not learn from experience, but rather they learn from processing experiences. He explained that a beginning teacher “should be directed to getting the student to judge his/her own work critically, to find out, in what respects he has succeeded and in what failed, and to find probable reasons for both failure and success” (p. 27). This is a seminal educational stance. Our perceptions are our realities. Accurate reflection is a learned skill many teachers early in their careers have not yet developed. What might be perceived as an instructional issue by a beginning teacher could be a classroom management or a planning issue: “If we knew just what the difficulty was and where it lay, the job of reflection would be much easier than it is...we know what the problem *exactly* is simultaneously with finding a way out and getting it resolved. Problem and solution stand out *completely* at the same time. Up to that point, our grasp of the problem has been more or less vague and tentative” (Dewey, 1933, p. 108, italics original).

In the article, *Distinguishing Expert Teacher from Novice and Experienced Teachers*, Hattie (2003) synthesized over “500,000 studies on the effects of influences on student achievement, and found the greatest source of variance to be the teacher, who

accounts for 30% of the variance.” Concentrating on the “person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act—the person who puts into place the end effects of so many policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling” (p. 3). Concentrating on the effectiveness of the teacher is where the most impact can be made. How do teacher evaluation systems promote effective teaching? What evidence from the classroom do expert teachers use to thoughtfully plan for and extend learning experiences? How do expert teachers engage students to be available for learning, and to grow from experiences?

Teacher appraisal traditionally placed teachers in a passive role (Holland & Adams, 2002). The system consisted of one or two classroom observations, depending upon where the teacher landed on the evaluation cycle, completed by the supervising administrator. The supervising administrator writes up his or her findings, provides feedback to the teacher, and then completes an evaluation for the teacher’s personnel file. Teacher evaluation systems supporting student learning by addressing instructional concerns through the process, to teacher dismissal, were extremely rare (Kane & Cantrell, 2010; Saphier, 1993; Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern & Keeling, 2009).

Danielson and McGreal (2000) provide a short history on the research on teaching and evaluation, demonstrating dramatic changes since the 1950s when teachers were evaluated according to teacher traits: “voice, appearance, emotional stability, trustworthiness, warmth, and enthusiasm” (p. 12). Teachers who exhibited these traits were thought to be more effective, and a model for excellent teaching was established.

Table 2.1. Historical Perspectives on the Research on Teaching

(Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Decade	Research on Teaching
1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trait research
1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher effectiveness: the correlational years • Clinical supervision
1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter Model • Learning styles
1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher effectiveness: the experimental period • Discipline models • Hunter derivatives • Effective schools research • Cooperative learning • Brain research
1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical thinking • Content knowledge • Content pedagogy • Alternative assessment • Multiple intelligence • Collaborative learning • Constructivist classrooms • Authentic pedagogy • Engaged teaching • Teaching for understanding
2000s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic pedagogy • Engage teaching and learning • Teaching for understanding

Clinical supervisory models of teacher evaluation, developed in the late 1950s, quickly became the model used by 90 percent of school administrators in the 1980s (Bruce & Hoehn, 1980). The work of Madeline Hunter in the 1980s continued the previous two decades of research, finding its roots in basic learning theory in a structured manner. *Mastery Teaching* was developed to increase teaching effectiveness for those who work with adolescents (Hunter, 1982), and was taught to aspiring classroom teachers

as a guide to lesson plan design and delivery. “Although designing a structured classroom is an important part of a teacher’s bag of tools, this is only a part of a larger range of skills and knowledge that comprises that is now viewed as effective teacher” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 13). The creation of evaluation criteria and check-off lists, based on the Hunter model and a general list of behaviors found to positively impact student achievement in the 1990s, were the foundation of current teacher evaluation systems, including those used in the district and discussed here in later chapters.

Concerns over the U.S. economy and changes in skill sets necessary for student successes in the workforce were contributing factors in determining desired outcomes for students—critical thinking, problem-solving, life-long learning, and collaborative problem solving (A Nation Prepared, 1986). Educational research in the 1980s informed our thinking about how children and adults learn, and in response changed delivery of instruction for students and professional development for teachers providing financial support from local, state, and national levels.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (also known as “The Stimulus”) provided funding for States to promote “educational innovation and reform.” One schooling-related funded grant within this act was called Race to the Top. Race to the Top was a value-added and competitive program in the form of a grant. This grant had a section called *Great Teachers and Leaders* with a total of 138 points possible, which was the highest number of points in the entire grant. That’s one example of a contemporary federal emphasis on improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. This type of approach is not sustainable because the funding disappears once the grant expires.

In response to federal funding, instructional frameworks created for use in teacher evaluation that promoted reflection and self-assessment as key components of improving practice, replaced prior scaled rating systems that provided poor opportunities for discussions about instruction between teachers and their evaluators (Danielson, 2012; Marzano, 2013; Stronge, 2014). “As our understanding of teaching expands and deepens, we need a vocabulary that is correspondingly rich; one that reflects the realities of a classroom where students are engaged in learning important content” (Danielson, 2013, p. 6). Using a framework to guide instructional conversations assists all teachers, especially beginning teachers, by providing the common language necessary to describe their experiences and to reflect upon their practice.

Charlotte Danielson defines good teaching in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (2013). Danielson recognizes the complexities of teaching and requires that teachers think deeply. She developed the framework to facilitate clear and meaningful conversations about effective teaching. Without the clarity of an instructional framework and common vocabulary, when a lesson does not go well, teachers are unable to describe or reflect upon their experience in positive and productive ways. It is through reflective practice, teachers problem solve all of the decisions made in the planning stages and during the delivery of the lesson. Collegial conversations around instructional practice within the structure of an instructional framework allow teachers to learn from each other and to improve their practice.

Critical Collegiality and Communities of Practice

All teachers need to hear other points of view and need to air their own ideas among colleagues whom they respect. Yet, the willingness of teachers to serve as commentators and critics of their own or other teachers' practices depends on perceived reciprocity—the likelihood other members of a department, faculty, or the profession generally, will participate fully (Lord, 1994). As trust and respect is earned and built, collegial relationships grow deeper, with both giving and taking.

The space where beginning teachers and mentors work can be defined using Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, a critical component to this theoretical framework. This theory states that through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings—such as schooling and peer group interactions—humans grow and develop accordingly. The central concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) describes the area between what the learner is able to achieve in isolation and what can be achieved with the support of an expert providing guidance and assistance. Erickson (1987) emphasizes Vygotsky's point that ZPD learning requires trust between instructor and learner, or to apply it to teacher induction and critical collegiality, to the mentor/teacher relationship.

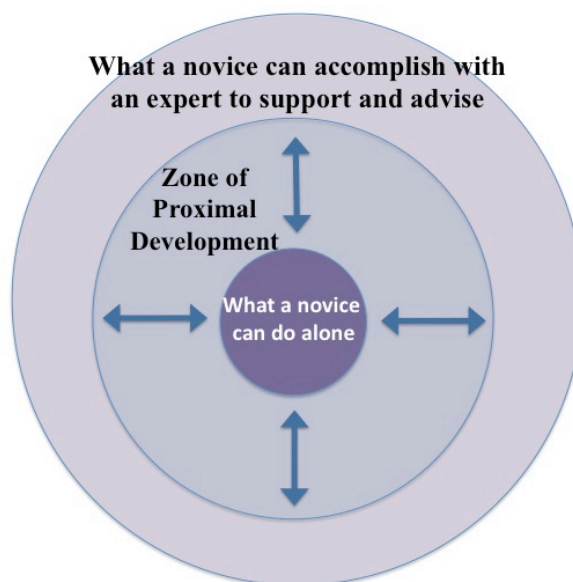


Figure 2.4. Zone of Proximal Development between a Novice and an Expert

While Vygotsky used his theory to explain early childhood development interactions between children and adults, his concept of ZPD has been expanded, modified, and molded into new concepts. I posit a beginning teacher will make greater gains in their teaching skills and content knowledge when they have an instructional leader as a mentor. Through guided reflection upon what was successful and what might have failed, beginning teachers determine next steps while improving their instruction and content knowledge in the process.

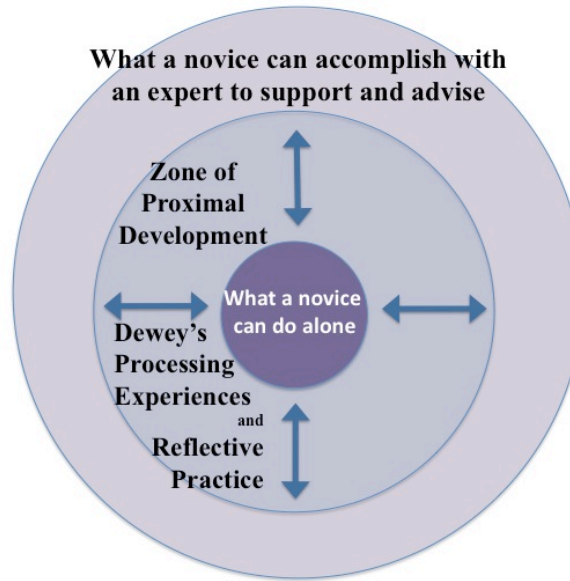


Figure 2.5. Zone of Proximal Development between a Novice and an Expert Processing Experiences and Reflective Practice

Embedding reflection into the “space” where mentors model reflective practice shows beginning teachers the importance of reflection as a daily, intentional habit that is critical to effective planning and teaching. In the reflective stage of an iterative lesson cycle, new teachers can be shown how to link planning to instructional delivery. What went well? What did not go well? How do you know? And what are you going to do about it? These basic questions help mentors and beginning teachers seek solutions, share ideas, and create new ways to engage students. Thus, both mentor and beginning teacher continue to learn and grow; beginning teachers move from asking questions to inserting themselves into instructional conversations, shifting in identity from student to teacher.

If we think of teacher induction as integral to the welcoming of new teachers into a professional community of practice, habits of reflection thus become foregrounded as part of that practice. As defined by Wenger (2006), “Communities of practice are groups

of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 2). For the purpose of this paper, the focal community is formed through the teacher induction process and thus includes mentors as *masters* and new teachers as *apprentices*.

Based on an analysis of ethnographic studies of apprenticeship, Lave and Wenger (1991) developed a theory of apprenticed learning to explain how context influences human social endeavors and generates practice, meaning, and identity. Referencing the scaffolding of beginning to more complex professional practices, Lave and Wenger use the label “legitimate peripheral participation” to describe the professional newcomers slow progression taking on progressively more and more complex tasks. This theory explains how, over time, newcomers (beginning teachers) enter, learn from, and contribute to an established community of practice.

Instructional leaders who serve as mentors in this context are considered full participants in the community, while beginning teachers are apprenticed into it. Wenger and Lave emphasize, “legitimate peripheral participation is not itself an educational form, much less a pedagogical strategy or a teaching technique” and that, “learning through legitimate peripheral participation takes place no matter which educational form provides a context for learning, or whether there is any intentional educational form at all” (1991, p. 40). This creates both research and development changes (depending on one’s task). For development, it means that because learning will happen it is important that the learning be topical and productive (that new teachers learn good habits, not problematic ones). From a research standpoint, the actual content and nature of mentor/new teacher interaction needs to be recorded.

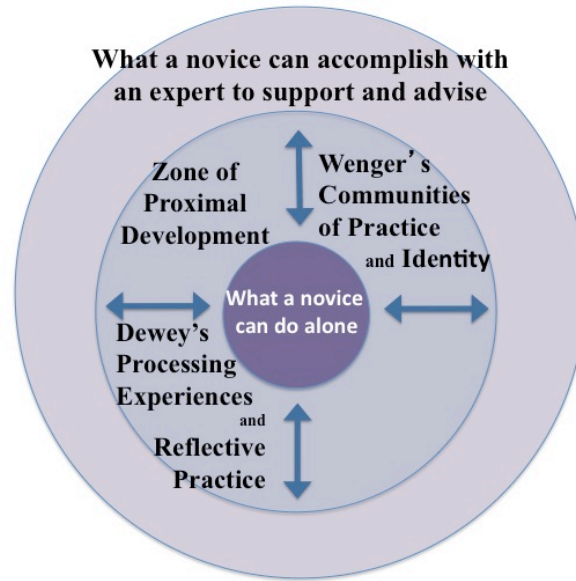


Figure 2.6. Zone of Proximal Development between a Novice and an Expert Processing Experiences and Reflective Practice Creating a Community of Practice and Identity

New teachers begin to undergo an identity transformation from the time they join the teaching profession, teachers becoming who they are based on social interactions in practice. According to Wenger (1998), “learning is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming” (p. 215).

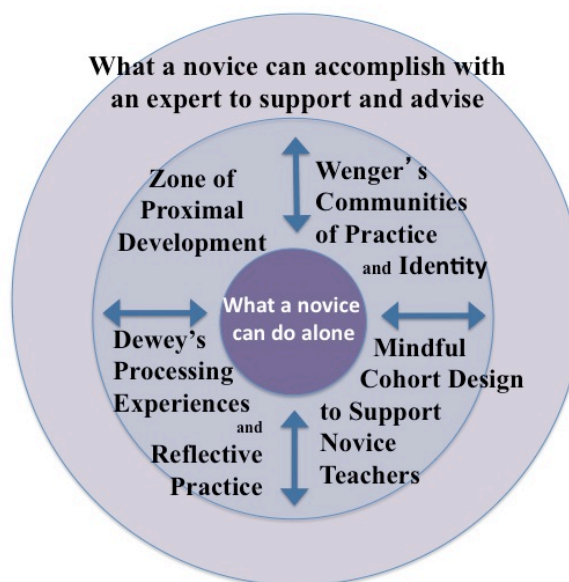


Figure 2.7. Zone of Proximal Development between a Novice and an Expert Processing Experiences and Reflective Practice Creating a Community of Practice and Identity, Supporting Teachers through a Mindful Cohort Design

A cohort design to mindfully support beginning teachers becomes the final layer of this theoretical framework to provide emotional and intellectual support during a time of incredible growth. At the same time, we started building the foundation of instructional leaders who will eventually become the mentors for the future cohort groups of beginning teachers. Cohort structures do not spontaneously occur but require special attention to group formation in the creation and nurturing of peer relationships. Cuddapah and Wenger (2011) examined how a cohort can be a valuable resource of new teacher support as part of an induction or mentoring program, and found a cohort design has potential to support and retain novice teachers. Mindful development of the culture of the cohort is critical to ensure a community of developed and nurturing relationships. Teachers must be able to function as members of a community of practitioners, sharing

knowledge and commitments, working together to create coherent curricula and systems supporting students, collaborating in ways that advance their combined understanding and skill (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007, p. 13).

Summary

Supporting all teachers along the continuum of their professional careers requires the work of educators, principals, and district officials, and this research practitioner. Mentor programs as part of comprehensive induction programs provide learning opportunities for beginning teachers and experienced teachers alike. Reflective practice, teacher evaluation for growth, and instructional frameworks provide common language for collegial conversations where beginning teachers form their own points of view and philosophical foundations as they enter communities of practice.

The review of literature in Chapter 2 provides the foundation of what the research literature says about attributes of teacher quality, effective instruction, and the mentoring process for new teachers and communities of practice. Chapter 3 details the research paradigm chosen to examine the mentor program under review, and how small changes impact new-hire experiences in a complex system.

Chapter 3

The topic of mentoring has always been important to me. Before explaining the instrumentation in detail, it is important to reveal my own experiences mentoring others and being mentored because inevitably those experiences influenced data I chose to examine, and the way the data were collected.

During my first year of teaching, I was fortunate to have an amazing mentor. Frau (a teacher of German) welcomed me to my first teaching position. She was not assigned to me. We taught in a small, rural district and were the only two in our department. Frau shaped how I taught and what I taught. She was my critical colleague who encouraged me to enroll in a Master's program and to take classes with her in the evenings. When I arrived at my next district, another amazing mentor, who was assigned to me, taught across the hall. Those experiences filled me with a profound desire to give back to the profession, and I have been drawn to give back by supporting the new-hires around me, teachers, and now, administrators as well. As a teacher leader, I served in the role of mentor for more than 10 new-hires. In 2006, the opportunity to become a .5 World Language Curriculum Specialist included a .5 Professional Development Specialist position. When this position became available, I was excited to be part of a program I thought I knew fairly well.

It was my personal experience as a mentor that propelled me to look at the perceptions of new-hires and teachers serving as mentors. As the administrator of the mentor program for nine years, I have been honest about my feelings and experiences as a new-hire, mentor to new-hires, and now an administrator supporting new-hires with all stakeholders. Some participants in the study are former colleagues. Critical colleagues

and months of data collection and analysis allowed me to see the big picture and to control my biases in this program evaluation. The data collected were detailed and reviewed by a colleague in the assessment and evaluation department who assisted me in my personal subjectivity in reporting the results of this program evaluation.

The featured mentor program in this program evaluation was initiated in response to state jurisprudence in 1998. In the beginning, mentors were paid to attend training workshops in addition to the time spent with the new-hire. Mentor training disappeared shortly after state funding disappeared. Grounded in compliance and accountability, mentors have been paid a stipend of \$175 for a new to the district mentee or \$350 for a new to the profession mentee. That amount of the stipend has not changed in 20 years. Principals determine who serves as the mentor for new-hires, and communicate the matches to the professional development office. If the principal did not assign a mentor, the new-hire did not participate in the program. Mentors were paid stipends once the required paperwork was submitted.

Research Design and Methodology

The New Teacher Center Induction Impact Plan (NTCIP) presents potential data sources, collection methods, and data sample sizes guiding data collection decisions for this study. Multiple data sources and different data collection methods—what some call triangulation (e.g., Denzin [1978])—provide a variety of lenses used to analyze a program (NTC, 2011). Lenses in this study include the perspectives of new-hires, mentors, principals, and the district departments of Human Resources, Computing Services, Curriculum, and Professional Development working in the same school district and complex system. “Artifacts as well as less concrete aspects such as activity

structures, institutions, scaffolds, and curricula” are all necessary to better understand the “theoretical claims about teaching and learning, and reflect a commitment of understanding the relationships among theory, designed artifacts, and practice” (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p. 6), bringing together “thick descriptive datasets and systematic analysis of data to provide robust explanations of innovative practice and principles that can be localized for others to apply to new settings” (p. 8). The existing mentor program has activity structures embedded into its annual cycle. One example of an activity structure is providing professional release time for teachers to observe similar classrooms in different buildings. The classroom observation paperwork provides a scaffold for new-hires, mentors and principals to create and reflect upon classroom observations, intentionally directing conversations and other reflection practices to instruction. Principal interviews, as well as new-hire and mentor reflections are a source of rich descriptions of the program. Large amounts of data are generated when involving all stakeholders from the district office to the building level. One of the challenges of this study is the large amount of data generated, yet one of the advantages of large amounts of data harkens back to “robust explanations.”

Implementation surveys provide quantitative data for the present program. Classroom observations, teacher/mentor reflections, and principal interviews provide more descriptive qualitative data that consider the effect an induction program has on students, beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and the district. Interpretive research provides an opportunity for people to talk about ideas and feelings in their own language, or to be observed by the researcher for meaning and relationships (Maxwell, 2004). It is through these ideas, feelings, meanings, and relationships that the stories of impact are

learned. Considering impact is essential: to improving program quality and effectiveness to better serve students, teachers, and schools; to telling the story illustrating the program's value to decision-makers and funders; and to making evidence-based decisions (NTC, 2011).

Research Design

Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009), encourage and empower teachers as educational leaders through “repositioning practitioners at the center of educational transformation by capitalizing on their collective intellectual capacity when working in collaboration with many other stakeholders in the educational process” (p. 153). Stakeholders in this evaluation of this mentor program include new-hires, mentors, principals, curriculum specialists, and the departments of human resources, computing services, curriculum, and professional development. My goal in this study is to understand the relationships between “educational theory, designed artifacts, and practice” (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003) and to understand how to position a mentor program in a complex system to support teaching and learning. As the problem of practice of this scholarly practitioner, “central to efforts that foster learning, create useable knowledge, and advance theories of teaching and learning in complex settings” (p. 5) design-based research is a model that “triangulates multiple sources and kinds of data to connect intended and unintended outcomes to processes of enactment” (p. 7), and is the chosen model for this project.

Design Research Paradigm

The Integrative Learning Design (ILD) framework (Figure 3.1) proposed by Bannan-Ritland (2003) provides both the structure and flexibility to explore complex systems in naturalistic settings. The ILD is comprised of four stages: (a) Informed Exploration, (b) Enactment, (c) Evaluation: Local Impact, (d) Evaluation: Broader Impact. Providing a macro level perspective, Figure 3.1 details the confluence of the many parts of the ILD to make a whole, and the use of the system thinking to create feedback loops (positive and negative) informing adaptations (the ILD uses the word “adaptions” rather than “adaptations”), I to programs or interventions, working the dialectic of theory and practice with the understanding of and intent that adaptations “diffuse” (IDL, 2003) or fractal throughout the structure of the complex system (Garmston & Wellman, 2013) in response to the adaption resulting in theory and system refinement. This study evolved from the Informed Exploration stage of the ILD, and as part of a continuous improvement cycle included parts of the Enactment and Evaluation stages as the study passed through the continuous cycle of integrative learning design.

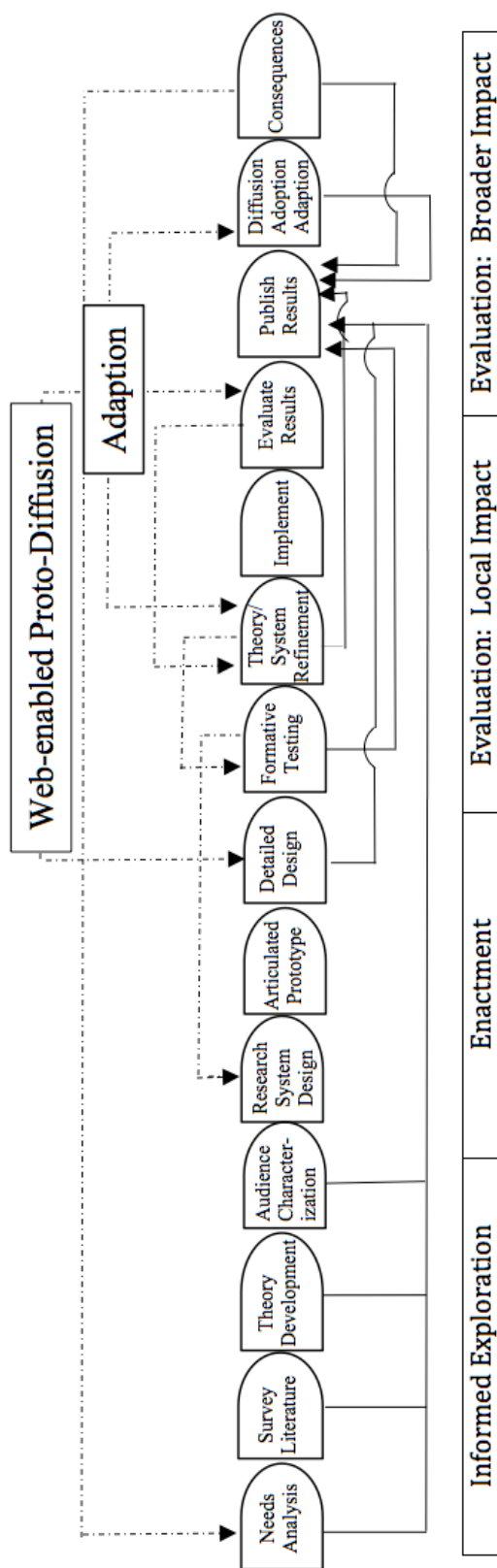


Figure 3.1. Integrative Learning Design Framework (Bannan-Ritland, 2003)

The next section describes the influence the New Teacher Center has had on the research design and in the selection of data already available and data to be collected for this study.

The New Teacher Center

The design of this study draws from recommendations of the *New Teacher Center: An Induction Program Impact Plan* (Figure 3.2.). The mission of the New Teacher Center (NTC) is to “examine how induction programs can most accurately measure and articulate impact, and has begun to define specific steps involved in creating such a plan” (p. 1) suggesting the impact spectrum as a conceptual framework when considering which data to collect.

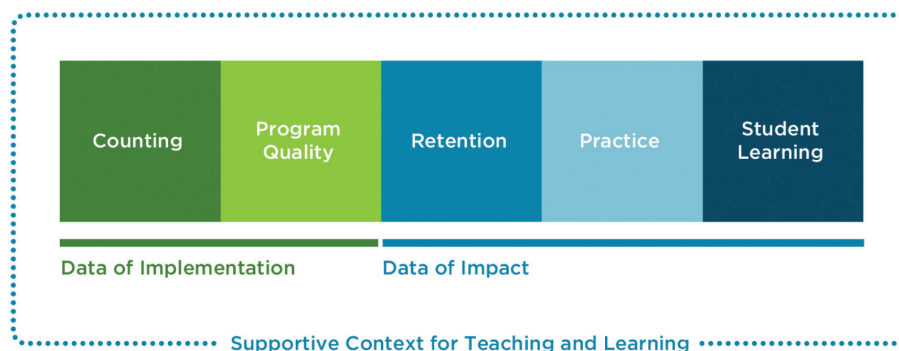


Figure 3.2. Induction Program Impact Spectrum (2011)

On the NTC Impact Spectrum, implementation data are descriptive in nature, providing information about teachers such as: number of years of experience; areas of expertise and credentials; school placement; educational background; number of participating teachers; and mentor case load. Implementation data can provide information about program fidelity and quality. This data assists decision-makers in making appropriate changes in professional development content and delivery.

Impact data illustrate the effect on students, beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and the district by surveying stakeholders, observing instruction, interviewing and/or otherwise collecting data from new teachers, mentors, principals, and others involved in induction. Because of the complex nature of the classroom, impact data tying teachers to individual student achievement has been attempted, yet not quite captured. Measuring the impact of structural changes in a complex system is the focus of this study because it can provide information whether or not a program makes a significant difference in teaching, school culture, and district commitment.

A target board approach (see Figure 3.3), recommended by the NTC, suggests “selecting a few key pieces of quantitative and qualitative data” based upon the purpose of the study (p. 3) from data that are already available and data that can be collected. Data that are already available include the digital file archives from 2000–2002, annual amount paid in mentor stipends. There are more data to be collected than are available. Available data include present programming protocols, archival files, and a survey of the literature. Data to be collected include anticipated needs surveys; classroom observation reflections completed by new-hires and mentors; an end-of-the-year self-reported needs survey; and a mentor report survey of new-hire needs.

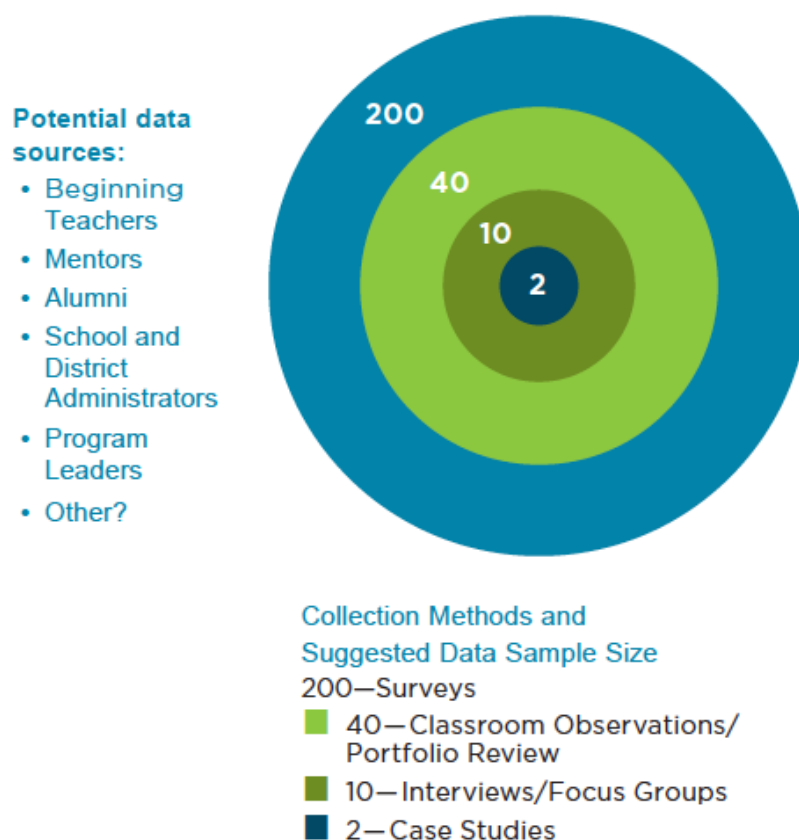


Figure 3.3. New Teacher Center Data Collection Target Board (2001)

Project Foundation and Timeline

True to continuous cycles of improvement and implications for adaptations and improvement, this project began as an exploration of a program in place for more than 20 years. The types of data chosen for this study and the ILD stages illustrate how the mentor program reviewed in this study is a “socially constructed object that must be systematically articulated and revised over a number of cycles rather than as a standard “treatment” intended to test hypothesis” (Design-Based Research collective, 2003, p. 23).

Table 3.1 below shows the stages of the ILD, and the data collected as recommended by the NTC, and the timelines in which the data were collected. The informed exploration and enactment stages detail the different data sources chosen for this research design. The ILD evaluation stages will be discussed in Chapter 4, as those stages are action steps as a result of adaptations and system refinement.

Table 3.1. ILD Framework, NTC Target Board Data Collected and Data Collection Timeline

Integrative Learning Design				
Data Collection Timeline	Informed Exploration	Enactment	Evaluation: Local Impact	Evaluation: Broader Impact
June 2014		Following the motions of a program in place Mentor Observation Guidelines as Articulated Prototype		
June 2014	Exploration of a program in place (NTC) Needs Analysis			
January – June 2014	Survey Literature			
July 2014	New-Hire Anticipated Needs Survey (NTC) Needs Analysis			
December 2014	New-Hire End of Semester Survey (NTC) Needs Analysis			

December 2014	Mentor End of Semester Survey (NTC)			
	Needs Analysis			
June - December 2014	Program History Review			
	Theory Development			
September-December 2014	Principal Interviews			
	Audience Characterization			

Study Setting

A mid-western urban school district in the United States was the location of the conduction of this program evaluation. At the time of the study, this school district employed more than 7,000 employees with a student enrollment of more than 39,000 students (Nebraska State of Schools Report, 2015). Recognized as one of the most welcoming cities in the United States for refugees (Welcoming America, 2016), the city of Lincoln and the school district continue to expand to meet the needs of a growing community. In the next two years this district will open an elementary and a middle-level building, making 63 sites. Presently, this district is comprised of six traditional high schools, seven high school focus programs, eleven middle schools, and thirty-nine elementary schools.

Because of state support systems, and the size of the district this study has the support of an educational service unit (ESU) working specifically with the district. The director of the ESU approved the study, and assigned an assessment specialist for support in creating, and administering the survey. The featured mentor program in this program

evaluation was created in response to state grants supporting beginning teachers twenty years ago, and was supervised by six different school administrators. Mentor training, critical to the program in the beginning, disappeared when state funding ran out in 2000. After state funding ran out, the school district continued to provide support to beginning teachers by providing mentors. The following two years the program underwent a program review conducted by the educational service unit serving the district.

Board policy created in 1996 provides a mentor for each new-hire to the district. The level of support provided a new-hire is determined by the experience the person brings to the position. New to the district hires are provided a nine-week mentor experience. New to the profession teachers receive eighteen weeks or one semester of support. Principals determine mentor matches at the building level, assigning a master teacher consistently modeling what is best for students and promoting a culture of learning. After the match between mentor/beginning teachers is made, a *Meet and Welcome Meeting* for all building new-hires, mentors, the building principal, and the professional development specialist is held to ensuring everyone understands the opportunities of the mentor program. This is also an opportunity for the researcher to answer any questions the dyad might have at the beginning of the school year.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected between June and December of 2015. This district has the support of a state-funded educational service unit (ESU) assigned specifically to the district for support in creating, implementing, analyzing, and reporting data to the state. The University of Nebraska Instructional Review Board (Appendix A), the Director of the Educational Service Unit (Appendix B), and the Director of

Professional Development at the district office (Appendix C) reviewed and approved this study. An assessment specialist was assigned to this project for support in creating and administering surveys.

The three steps recommended by the New Teacher Center (2011) in creating an impact plan were: identification of purpose and a selection of data; creation of a data-collection plan; and a process by which to collect and analyze data.

The first step, the purpose of data collection in this study, is to evaluate the present state of a district mentor program in terms of program implementation as well as the impact the program design has on the participation and satisfaction of new-hires, mentors, and principals. At the start of the project, all available data from multiple departments at the district level were gathered. Data available as a natural process of the program included historical financial files, classroom observations and reflections of new-hires and mentors from the 2011-2012 school year to present (due to a fire that destroyed the district office in May of 2011). Collectable data were comprised of need analysis surveys as self-reported by both new-hires and mentors.

The data collection plan for this study is a confluence of the IDL and the NTC Target Board, and the second recommended step of the NTC. The process of collecting data includes multiple measures such as archival data, surveys, site visits, principal interviews, classroom observations, and beginning teacher/mentor reflections. Building trust through transparency and clear communication ensure all stakeholders understand the purpose for data collection. Program evaluations require the cooperation of teachers, mentors, principals, and district administrators. Open and honest feedback from stakeholders about successes and challenges become critical in the evaluation process.

The third step in creating an impact plan is based on providing structures to “review, synthesize, and analyze the data” (NTC, 2011, p. 3). Systemic structures include coordinating district level calendars providing sanctioned time for all stakeholders to connect, reflect, and determine next steps. Structures also include organizing district departments (human resources, curriculum, building principals, professional development opportunities, computing services, and mentors) to be fully prepared to welcome beginning teachers at the start of the year. Connecting curriculum specialists and beginning teachers, to begin professional connections and conversations around a guaranteed and viable curriculum, is necessary for the success of all stakeholders. Structures such as a guaranteed and viable curriculum, when not in place, can have devastating impacts on beginning teachers and their students. Analyzing and reflecting upon data across departments at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year informs next steps and a continuous cycle of improvement. Transparency and communication of impact within a program enlightens all stakeholders. Sharing the stories and reflections of beginning teachers and their mentors builds ownership and cultivates a culture of welcoming beginning teachers to the district. Telling a compelling story, through the eyes of teachers and mentors, also demonstrates impacts the induction experience has on beginning teachers and mentors.

The New Teacher Center cautions to consider an Impact Plan as a “multi-step process,” advising that collecting data for each category on the impact spectrum can become overwhelming (NTC, 2011, p. 3). The target board created for this program evaluation (Figure 3.4) brings together the mentor program perspectives of new-hires, mentors, and principals about current program structures and activities. Principal

interviews took the place of the two case studies on the NTC Target Board. More data were collected and analyzed than are presented here.

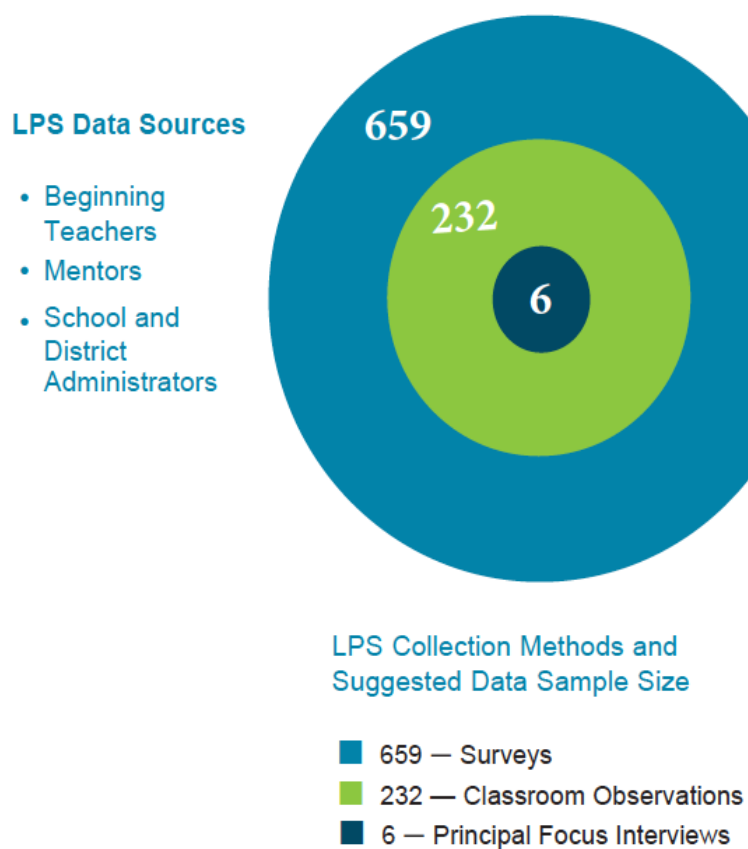


Figure 3.4. NTC Target Board with Potential District Data Sources

Archival Data (ILD Stage: Informed Exploration, Need Analysis)

Not included in the NTC Target Board, nevertheless important to understanding the program as a whole, historical data can be mined from data bases or files, and provide a basic understanding of how the program was initially implemented. Archival data is important to know what parts of the program were successful, which parts might have failed, and perhaps why, depending upon the data. The Lincoln Public Schools Mentor Program began in August of 1999. As part of the Nebraska Mentor Teacher Program grant, funding was provided to support first-year public school teachers. Based on the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, in conjunction with the Nebraska Mentor Teacher Program Grant, Lincoln's Emerging Educators Program (LEEP), welcomed new teachers to Lincoln Public Schools. Each year, teachers considered instructional leaders were chosen by building principals and recommended to the professional development office. Those leaders were provided training to mentor new teachers to the district. Training for mentors ceased to exist in 2002. Some of the data in this study were gathered by going through past mentor program records. Most of the archival records were destroyed in a fire at the district office in May of 2011.

Prior to the fire, discovered by accident in an abandoned file cabinet, some of the Lincoln Emerging Educator's Program historical files were left from program predecessors and scanned into a district digital repository (Appendices D through G). Those four recovered digital files provide a historical perspective of the program from its inception until February 2002 and are the only artifacts remaining from the original program.

The first document, *Mentor Teacher Program Summary for Lincoln Public Schools*, Spring, 2001 (Appendix D) was not dated or signed by the author. Based on other artifacts, I believe it was created by one of the program administrators in the fall of 2000.

The second, a report describing the procedures and findings regarding implementation of the Mentor Academy Program titled *Reflective Thinking Summary* (Appendix E) conducted between August 1999 – August 2001 analyzes the effectiveness of the reflective thinking strategy implemented as part of the mentor training program, and its impact on reflective habits of program participants.

An evaluation of Lincoln's Emerging Educators Program dated August 2001 (Appendix F) facilitated by Educational Service Unit #18 showed issues surfacing in the program that became the focus of a survey for use with all LEEP participants in March of 2001.

The last document, dated eleven months later, is a memo titled *Lincoln's Emerging Educator's Program Casual Observations Memo* (Appendix D) that shares observations of the program in its early stages.

Financial reports since 2006 showing mentor stipends paid and substitute salaries paid over the years reveal some of the financial implications of program participation over the past 10 years. One budget line is dedicated to stipends paid to mentors who complete the paperwork for classroom observations.

2014–2015 New-Hire Self-Report of Anticipated Need Survey (ILD Stage: Informed Exploration, Need Analysis)

Three multi-item electronic surveys modeled after the instrument in the SRI International Report, *Examining the Effects of New Teacher Induction* (2010), created with the support of an assessment specialist from ESU#18 were distributed to new-hires and mentors over a period of six months. The SRI International survey provided the researcher an instrument and an opportunity to compare local data to a larger sample of almost 2,000 beginning teachers in 39 State-Funded Mentoring and Induction Programs for this program evaluation.

The conflict of interest protocols per IRB were performed by a curriculum specialist colleague who is certified by IRB to present information about the study and the New Employee Informed Consent. The specialist explained the project and the informed consent process as required by IRB. Participants filled out the New-Hire Informed Consent form and were provided access to the electronic survey. The survey was introduced to new-hires at the end of an operational technology workshop where new-hires were distributed a district-provided laptop, and a three-hour workshop based upon the systems teachers would need to know to start the school year (student information system, grading software, computing services support systems, etc.). Because all new-hires must attend this training to receive district- provided laptops prior to the start of the school year, it was a natural time to administer the survey. Four sessions over a two-day period were provided so new-hires could secure their district-provided laptops.

The New-Hire Self-Report of Anticipated Needs Survey was a twelve-item instrument. The instrument consisted of three sections: new-hire demographic information (Table 3.2), anticipated support needed by beginning teachers (Table 3.3), and levels of teacher efficacy (Table 3.3). Table 3.2 seeks to identify the 2014-2015 new-hire cohort.

Table 3.2. Demographic Questions from The New-Hire Self-Report of Anticipated Needs Survey

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?
2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
3) Please indicate your gender.
4) What is your age?
5) What is your Full Time Employee status?
6) How would you describe your main teaching assignment in terms of grade level? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend most of your time.
7) How would you describe your MAIN teaching assignment for the current school year? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend the majority of your time.

8) How long do you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another

In Table 3.3 s self-report the levels of support they thought they needed to be successful. The thirteen program quality questions included the level of support needed in the areas of curriculum, instruction, classroom management, classroom materials, use of data for planning instruction, etc.

Table 3.3. Questions Relating to Program Quality

9) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you need in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.			
	Need Minimal Support	Need Moderate Support	Need Extensive Support
The curriculum I teach.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	()	()	()
Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for my current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g., analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()

Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	()	()	()
Creating a positive learning environment.	()	()	()
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()
Evaluating and reflecting upon my own teaching practices.	()	()	()

Teacher efficacy is the focus of Table 3.4 asking new-hires to identify agreement with statements inquiring if the new-hire is confident in their ability to teach, to handle challenging circumstances, and to adapt to the needs of students.

Table 3.4. Questions Relating to Teacher Efficacy

10) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am confident in my ability to teach effectively.	()	()	()	()
I can handle a range of challenging classroom management and discipline situations.	()	()	()	()
If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I know techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	()	()	()	()

<i>I am equally successful in helping students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds to learn.</i>	()	()	()	()
<i>I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of English language learners.</i>	()	()	()	()
<i>I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of special education students.</i>	()	()	()	()
If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.	()	()	()	()
If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	()	()	()	()
If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to create a positive learning environment.	()	()	()	()
Increased my effectiveness in using informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()	()
I am able to adapt instruction so that I meet the needs of students at varying academic levels equally well.	()	()	()	()

I added three questions (in italics) to the SRI International survey to solicit feedback on support needed in terms of *cultural proficiency*, *service to English Language Learners*, and *special education students*. These three areas are of particular interest to the District's strategic plan and the research context.

Site Visits (ILD Stage: Informed Exploration, Audience Characterization)

Site visits occur before, during, or after school and are arranged by the building principal. The visits take place in the building where the new-hire is assigned and take about 20 minutes. There are over 60 sites being studied in the district. An annual timeline goal is to have the site visits completed before the end of the first nine weeks of school. This activity is called *Meet and Welcome* and is when I provide details about the different opportunities the program affords participants, and communicate the mission and vision of the program.

LPS Mentor Guidelines Bookmark (ILD Stage: Enactment, Articulated Prototype)

The LPS Mentor Guidelines Bookmark new in 2015, serves as a mini-agenda, and is a talking tool the researcher uses to share the most important features of the mentor program at the site visits. The bookmarks were created as a two-sided document, printed front-to-back on card stock and then, cut apart. This talking tool ensures the same message is shared at each site visit. The bookmark provides the essential program information as well as contact information for the researcher and the administrative assistant supporting the work to assist with any questions a participant might have.

LPS Mentor Guidelines Observation Protocol (ILD Stage: Enactment, Articulated Prototype)

At each site visit, the Mentor Guidelines are shared and explained thoroughly to principals, new-hires, and mentors. The district program expectations are detailed in a set of guidelines originally created by me in 2009 with revisions every year since then (Appendix F). The role of the mentor, contact time requirements, mentor stipends, and an organizational meeting are explained in the 20-minute *Meet and Welcome* as described

above. Program expectations also include an observation protocol including a pre-observation graphic organizer, classroom observation graphic organizer, and an observation reflection crafted by the beginning teacher with the guidance of the mentor. Once the observation paperwork is submitted to the professional development office, the researcher codes observations using district appraisal framework domains, based on the Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. The four domains included in the framework are (a) planning and preparation, (b) classroom management, (c) instruction, and (d) professional responsibility. An added observational opportunity for the dyad is for the mentor and the new-hire to watch another teacher during instruction in a building with similar demographics. Classroom observation and teacher reflection data are coded based on the domains as described in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson (2012).

The last page of the LPS Mentor Guidelines contains the LPS Mentor Program Mentor Informed Consent. Mentors who chose to participate in the study signed and submitted the informed consent with the LPS Mentor Guidelines. Participation in the research included allowing the use of the classroom observation reflection to make improvements in the present mentor program.

Principal Interviews (ILD Stage: Informed Exploration, Audience Characterization)

Over the course of the study, six principals were interviewed about the implementation and impact of the program. Two elementary, two middle level, and two high school principals were interviewed at their building sites during the school day. Upon arrival at the buildings, and after an explanation of the purpose for the interview,

each of the six principals signed the Mentor Program Principal Informed Consent. The principals chosen to participate were volunteers from a group of principals who annually participate in the mentor program. The Principal Interview Protocol provides information regarding principal engagement and can answer questions such as: Are principals creating an environment where beginning teachers have the support necessary to learn and grow in their new profession? How do principals select mentors for beginning teachers? What does this process look like and why? What perceptions do principals have in terms of effective mentors? Are principals actively involved in assessing the effectiveness of beginning teachers, and how do principals use formative and summative assessment ensuring beginning teacher growth? Table Principal engagement is key to the success of beginning teachers. Principals understanding the value of induction and putting the necessary structures in place at the building level better serve beginning teachers and their mentors.

Table 3.5. Principal Interview Questions

LPS Mentor Program
1) How many new-hires do you have in a typical year?
3) What does that process look like? When? Who?
4) What are the characteristics of an effective mentor?
5) Do new-hires and mentors have regularly scheduled meetings?
6) How has the LPS Mentor Program impacted your teachers and their transition to your building?
7) What are the positive outcomes of the LPS Mentor Program?

LPS New Teacher Orientation (NTO)
9) How successful is NTO in preparing new-hires for the start of the school year?
10) What would you like to see in future NTOs?

2014–2015 End of the Semester New-Hire Self-Report Actual Need Survey (ILD

Stage: Evaluation, Formative Testing)

At end of the fall 2014 semester school year, new-hires were contacted by email to complete a second survey (Appendix H) to see if the needs as perceived at the start of the semester were the same as the actual need at the end of the first semester. This second survey was created to collect implementation and impact data on beginning teachers being served and the context in which they work. Participants were asked to complete a multi-item electronic survey within a two-week period. It took each teacher participant approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey.

The sixteen-item survey, administered at the end of the first semester, mirrored the first new-hire survey to determine if anticipated needs were the same as actual needs, and if levels of efficacy changed during the first semester. These data include demographic information (Table 3.7): classroom teaching experience, level of education, gender, age, full time employee status, teaching assignment, grade level, and number of years of experience. New-hire program fidelity (Table 3.8) data collected included level of support needed in areas of curriculum; instructional strategies; classroom management; data collection; lesson adaptations for students with individual educational plans; cultural proficiency; planning for instruction; formative and summative assessment strategies; reflection upon teaching; and teacher efficacy. A section added to the second survey

sought information regarding program participation (Table 3.9). On January 23rd, a reminder email was sent to new-hires asking them to hit delete if they had completed the survey, or to complete it before the end of the day.

Table 3.6. Demographic Questions from the New-Hire Self-Report of Need Survey

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?
2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?
3) Please indicate your gender.
4) What is your age?
5) What is your Full Time Employee (FTE) Status? Full Time = 1.0
6) How would you describe your main teaching assignment in terms of grade level? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend most of your time.
7) How would you describe your MAIN teaching assignment for the current school year? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend the majority of your time.
8) How long do you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another school?

9) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you needed in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.

Questions relating to program quality were the same questions asked of new-hires in July. Considering the phases of teacher attitudes, the thrill of starting a new adventure and the complex nature of teaching, one might assume new-hires all have similar experiences.

Table 3.7. Questions Relating to Program Quality

	Needed Minimal Support	Needed Moderate Support	Needed Extensive Support
The curriculum I teach.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	()	()	()
Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for my current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g., analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of	()	()	()

English language learners.			
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating a positive learning environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluating and reflecting upon my own teaching practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From the district office, it is difficult to know who is participating and at what level. Some mentors and new-hires spend time together as daily practice, while others meet on occasion. Setting up structures so teachers can be successful is critical and the reason for the series of questions listed in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9. Questions Related to Mentor Program Participation

10) Were you assigned a mentor? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
10A) How often have you interacted with your assigned mentors this school year on a formal basis? On a formal basis means interacting during dedicated or scheduled time; this does not include, for example, short conversations while passing in the hall. <input type="radio"/> Once <input type="radio"/> A few times <input type="radio"/> Once per month <input type="radio"/> A few times per month <input type="radio"/> Several times per week <input type="radio"/> Daily

10B) How often have you interacted with your assigned mentors this school year on an informal basis? On an informal basis means engaging in short conversations during the school day.

- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ Several times per week
- ☐ Daily

11) Think about all of the new teacher supports you have received during the current school year including the previous summer. Please indicate the extent to which these supports have improved your knowledge and skills in the following areas.

Welcoming new-hires to the district requires the time and attention of many.

Table 3.10 inquires about the lived experience and the value of that experience as perceived by the new-hire.

Table 3.10. Questions Related to the Quality of the Mentor Program

	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Deepened my grasp of the subject matter I teach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased my knowledge of instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved my classroom management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved my interactions with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved my ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of students at varying academic levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improved my ability to plan lessons and design instruction.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to adapt instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to meet the instructional needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to meet the instructional needs of English language learners.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to create a positive learning environment.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to use data (e.g. analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()	()
Increased my effectiveness in using informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to evaluate and reflect upon my own teaching practices.	()	()	()	()

2014–2014 End of Semester Mentor Report of New-Hire Perceived Need (ILD

Stage: Evaluation, Evaluate Results)

At end of Fall 2014, the implementation of a third, similar multi-item electronic survey email request was sent to district mentors. The End of Semester Mentor Report of New-hire Perceived Need Survey (Appendix I) collected implementation data from mentors and the context in which they work. This survey was emailed to mentors to determine if mentor perceptions of support were in alignment with needs reported by new-hires. The eighteen-item mentor survey also solicited information regarding support

in place for mentors, role expectations, and ongoing support. These data include: classroom teaching experience, level of education, gender, age, full time employee status, teaching assignment, grade level, number of years of experience, and completed observation reflection submission. Mentor program fidelity data include level of support needed to serve as a mentor in the areas of curriculum, instructional strategies, classroom management, data collection, lesson adaptations for students with individual educational plans, cultural proficiency, planning for instruction, formative and summative assessment strategies, and reflection upon teaching (Table 3.11). Program fidelity includes mentor assignment, principal engagement, and sanctioned time for mentors and new-hires to plan and reflect. Program quality details mentor value perceptions (Table 3.12) of the program and the satisfaction of the quality of the experience and types of mentor-beginning teacher interaction with district offered professional development. Table 3.13 is a series of questions about the role of the mentor, program expectations for mentors and interest ongoing mentor professional development. Questions from the mentor survey were paralleled with the beginning teacher surveys to gauge perceptions of new teachers and mentors in terms of support needed and support provided. A reminder email was sent to mentors on January 20, 2015 requesting input from those who had not yet completed the survey, and to remind those who might have deleted the email.

Table 3.11. Demographic Questions from the End-of-First Semester Mentor Survey

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?
2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

3) Please indicate your gender.
4) What is your age?
5) What is your Full Time Employee (FTE) Status? Full Time = 1.0
6) How would you describe your main teaching assignment in terms of grade level? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend most of your time.
7) How would you describe your MAIN teaching assignment for the current school year? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend the majority of your time.
8) How long to you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another school?
9) Year(s) mentoring with LPS? <input type="checkbox"/> First <input type="checkbox"/> 2-6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7-10 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-25
10) Total number of beginning teachers you currently support: <input type="checkbox"/> One <input type="checkbox"/> Two <input type="checkbox"/> Three or more

Table 3.11. Demographic Questions from the End-of-First Semester Mentor Survey
Continued

<p>11) How many schools do you currently mentor in?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> One</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Two</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Three or more</p>
<p>12) Typically, how long is an average meeting with your new-hires?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Once a month or less often</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Every two weeks</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Weekly</p> <p><input type="radio"/> More than once a week</p>
<p>13) Typically, how long is an average meeting with your beginning teachers?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 30 minutes or less</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 1 hour</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 1 hour and 30 minutes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> 2 hours or more</p>
<p>14) Typically how often do you and your principal or person who assigned your new-hire to you set aside time to discuss your work with new-hires?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Never</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Once yearly</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Twice yearly</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Every 6 weeks</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Monthly</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Every two weeks</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Weekly</p>

One might assume mentors are older and have more years of experience than new-hires. The above series of demographic questions (Table 3.11) are designed to gain a better understanding of what the mentor force looks like and how to support them. When a principal finds a successful mentorship, the mentor is asked to serve again. Sometimes mentors have more than one mentee during the year.

Table 3.12 asks the mentor the same series of questions asked of new-hires at the beginning and at the end of the semester. Bringing the perceptions and attitudes from the

new-hire's prior-self, end of the first semester-self and the perception of the support the mentor provided at the end of the semester adds interesting layers of the supports in place for mentors and new-hires.

Table 3.12. Mentor Perceptions of Program Quality

15) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you have provided in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.			
	Provided Minimal Support	Provided Moderate Support	Provided Extensive Support
Curriculum the new-hire teaches.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject the new-hire works with.	()	()	()
Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students the new-hire works with.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for the new-hire's current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students the new-hire currently teaches	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g., analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	()	()	()

Creating a positive learning environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evaluating and reflecting upon teaching practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

From 1996-2005 mentors were provided with varying levels of training. The expectations for training also varied. Table 3.13 inquires about mentor perceived mentor skill development and meeting program expectations.

Table 3.13. Questions Related to Mentor Development

16) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, the mentoring program has assisted me in developing my mentoring skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am clear about the expectations for my role.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The initial meeting at my building with my principal and the district professional development specialist was sufficient to get me started.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To increase my mentor skills I would participate in on-going training from the professional development office to be more effective in my role as a mentor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Because of the lack of engagement in completing mentor paperwork, mentors would often agree to support a new-hire, and not submit the paperwork to receive the stipend. The paperwork took too much time and seemed *like one more thing* for mentors to do rather than an opportunity to provide feedback to both the new-hire and the district. Table 3.14 intends to find out how many are actually participating and if they value the professional development experiences the program provides.

Table 3.14: Questions Related to Mentor Perception of Mentor Program Participation

17) Did you complete the LPS Mentor Observation and reflection paperwork? (yes) (no)
18) What recommendations might you have regarding the observation and reflection forms?
19) Overall, to what degree do you think your mentor-ship had an impact on your new-hires' professional development? () None at all () Hardly any () Some () Quite a bit () A great deal

Mentor perception of mentor program effectiveness in supporting new-hires and building efficacy is addressed in Table 3.15. Efficacious mentors supporting new-hires and modeling the skills of collaboration, communication and professionalism could be one of the small events in a complex system with great impact. My intent is to capitalize on the mentorship to build efficacy in new-hires.

Table 3.15: Questions Related to Mentor Perception of Mentor Program Effectiveness

20) Overall, to what degree do you think the mentoring program helps new teachers in the following ways:					
	None at all	Hardly any	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal
Stay in the field of education	()	()	()	()	()
Grow as a professional	()	()	()	()	()
Learn to work collaboratively with other teachers	()	()	()	()	()
Develop effective parent communication	()	()	()	()	()
Other (please specify below)	()	()	()	()	()

In order for mentorships to be successful, mentors who are closest to the daily work of new-hires have experiences that can inform and improve the mentorship experience. Table 3.16 asks mentors for recommendations on improving the mentorship experience and program.

Table 3.16. Questions Relating to Support Recommendations from Mentors

21) How can the Professional Development office support your development as a mentor?
22) How can the LPS Mentor Program continue to support new-hires?
23) What recommendations for professional learning opportunities do you have for the professional development office?

The table below shows the timeline of the three surveys. When the surveys were implemented, and to whom the surveys were sent.

Table 3.17 Timeline of Survey Administration

July 2014	New-hire Self-Report of Anticipated Need Survey
January 2015	End of Semester New-hire Self-Report Actual Need Survey
January 2015	End of Semester Mentor Report of Actual Need

Data Presentation

This data-collection plan is organized chronologically to illuminate the natural cycle of the program and the poking and prying with purpose—formalizing curiosity with continuous adaptations and refinement. Data presented in Chapter 4 will also be presented chronologically.

Chapter 4

Results

Mentoring is one strategy used by school districts to support new-hires. A purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what it is like entering a new school district and teaching position through the lived experiences of new-hires, mentors, and principals. This chapter presents the data and findings in the same chronological order it was gathered from a review of archives, three surveys, mentor observations/new-hire reflections, and one-on-one focus interviews with principals. In the context of this program evaluation, the Integrative Learning Design (ILD) paradigm is utilized for its continuous cycle of monitoring and adapting educational experiences and other professional development opportunities to meet the professional goals of new-hires and mentors.

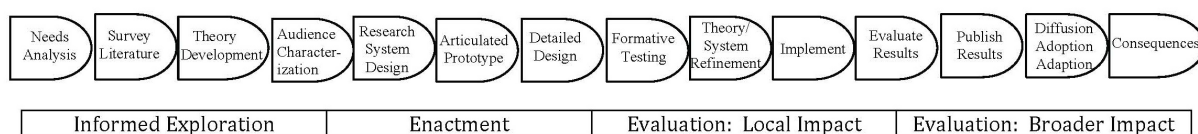


Figure 4.1. Integrative Learning Design Paradigm (see Chapter 3 for a full-page version)

As a reminder of the ILD and where the corresponding data source for this program review lands in the ILD cycle, a graphic organizer (Figure 4.1), which is an adaptation of Figure 3.1, introduces each data source throughout the first half of the chapter. It is almost the same figure each time with different components emphasized so readers should note Figures 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.13 vary in subtle but important ways. The component, and stage are illuminated by shading the components represented in blue. It is important to note the many different places where gathered data can influence the program structures and design.

In the second half of the chapter, data are analyzed and presented by research question.

The questions guiding this study were:

1. What was the experience of a new-hire in a rapidly growing district?
2. How efficacious did new-hires feel?
3. How satisfied were new-hires, mentors, and principals with the support provided by the district?

Archival Data Review

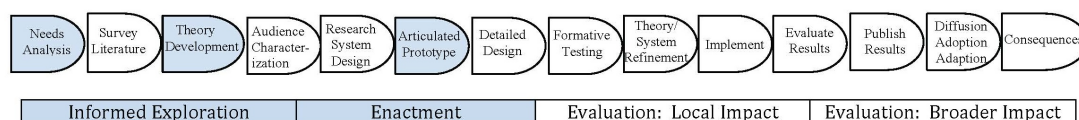


Figure 4.2. Integrative Learning Design and Archival Data Collected

The archival data review is an informed exploration of the existing program that included a need analysis, an understanding of the context in which the program was established, and how the program has supported new-hires and mentors since its inception. Need analysis, theory development, and articulated prototype are the components (Figure 4.2) of the informed exploration and enactment stages of the ILD, and where archival data live in this research design.

The LPS Mentor Program is one of the professional development programs offered to teachers new to the profession as well as to the district. The archive of digital files document the program in its early stages, starting with the Lincoln Emerging Educators Program (LEEP) review of the program from 1998–2001. The documents found in the appendices of this paper are from this digital

archive and provide valuable information about the original program, how the program was implemented, and how it was received.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards identified the practice of reflection as a key component of quality teaching, and was the foundation of the district mentor program. In LEEP's third year, an assessment of reflective practice was given to the new teacher and their mentors. The LEEP study concluded "new teachers often feel overwhelmed when faced with multiple demands on their time" and, "significant improvement in teachers' capability to be reflective in their work is disappointing" as reported by the educational administrator facilitating the 2001 Program Review. It appears that teachers did not feel there was enough time for them to practice reflective thinking.

Although LEEP had great intentions, a feeling of being overwhelmed is a universal experience for many people when new to a profession. The manner in which the LEEP program was implemented left much to be desired. A memorandum was sent to the Superintendent of Human Resources, the professional development team who implemented the program, and to the grant supervisor. The memorandum details issues arising in focus groups in March of 2001.

According to the archival survey data, the needs of LEEP participants (new-hires and mentors). New teachers were extremely overwhelmed with what they viewed as too much information, valuable time was wasted in meetings, and too much paperwork was distributed. Teachers not new to the profession but new to the district, felt their previous teaching experience was not honored or

respected. Often teachers felt the LEEP requirements and expectations were poorly articulated.

Feedback from the LEEP Questionnaire in August 2001 was collected and disseminated in a new memo sent out in February of 2002 (Appendix D). This memo was designed to address concerns raised regarding the mentor program requirements, district tenure requirements, building obligations and how those programs were overwhelming new teachers. A strategy was put in place to review the revised plan, identify solutions, and to explore new options for tenure requirements as well as other district requirements by the ESU #18 Evaluation Team.

A review of annual financial statements over the past ten years produced two dedicated financial lines. These financial statements provide insight to program cost and to program growth. Figure 4.3 details the amount of money paid in mentor stipends beginning with the 2006–2007 school year to present. Mentor stipends are paid to mentors after observation and the professional development office receives reflection paperwork. Lack of data from the 2010–2011 school year is due to the fire that destroyed the district office building in May of 2011. All mentor observation paperwork and documentation was lost as were most district documents. Recovery time for the mentor program is also reflected in this graph. In 2012–2013 the number of mentor/new-hire dyads completing and submitting the mentor observation paperwork almost reached the 2008–2009 paperwork submission numbers.

Beginning in January of 2011 I was engaged in doctoral coursework supporting a survey of the literature and developing theories on essential elements of effective induction programs. The passion, commitment, and greater understanding of complex systems I gained during this time might have had an impact on the marketing and enthusiasm around the program.

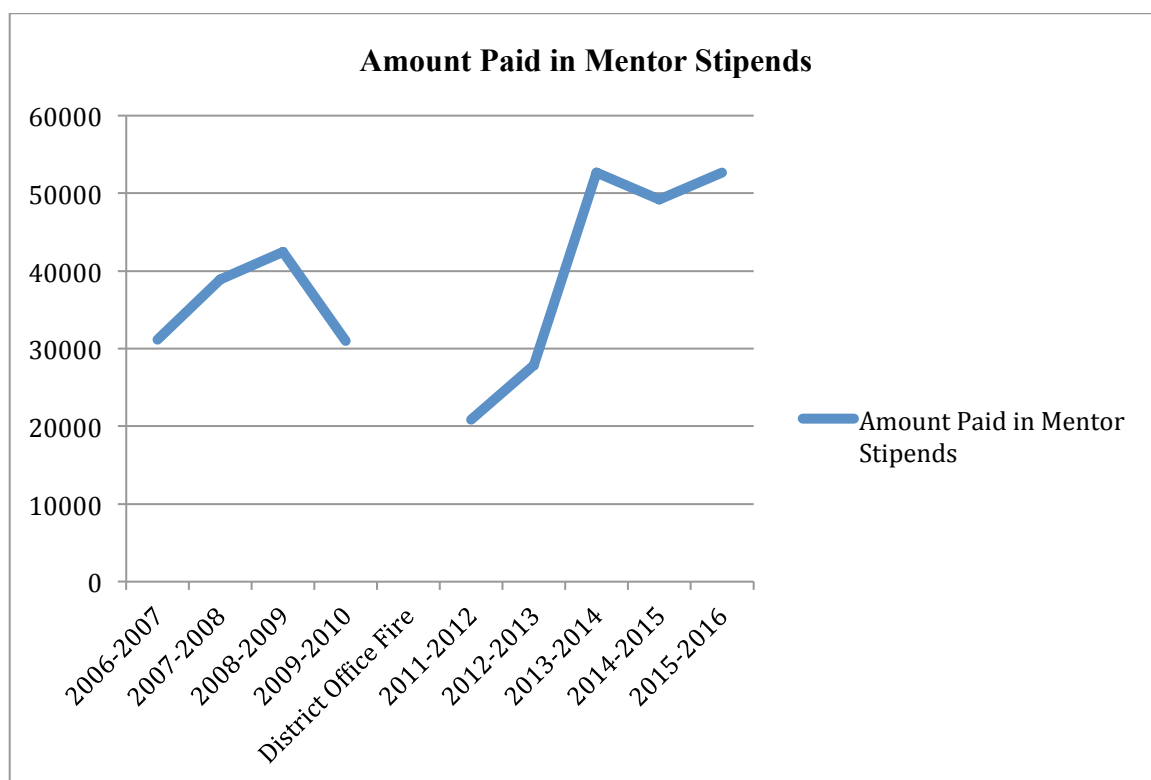


Figure 4.3. Integrative Learning Design and Archival Data Collected

The structure of the program in 2006 was not new-hire friendly. For professional release time, a new-hire was expected to find a classroom in another building on her or his own and to participate in the activity in isolation. New-hires were not confident enough, nor did they have the professional or social capital to make such arrangements. For those new-hires able to make the off site

observation, the reflection was based on the physical surround of the classroom rather than the instruction observed. The structure of the off site visit was changed in the 2013–2014 school year. The new professional release structure encouraged mentors and new-hires to go together to another building to observe classes for half a day. The funding remained the same, as the new-hire was allocated one full day of release time. When the new-hire and the mentor each take half a day, the same financial commitment allows for deeper reflection and conversations around instruction. From the 2013-2014 school year to the 2104-2015 school year, the amount paid to substitutes in professional release for teachers doubled. From the 2014–2015 to the 2015–2016 school year that amount doubled a second time. Substitute pay went up because more time and attention were being paid to the mentorship experience.

Based on historical documents available in the digital archives, the data led us to understand teachers new to the profession and the district need support in learning the culture of the district and building in which he/she teaches, instructional strategies, curriculum; lesson planning and design, class management, and motivation.

According to archival reports, the past mentor program did not adequately support new teachers nor did it prepare the mentors to serve the new-hires. These areas of concern were identified and memos were generated in response to issues arising in meetings. Access to the original surveys is not available, however memos sent to human resources after the survey was completed detail the areas of concern as lack of feedback for both mentors and new-hires.

2014–2015 New-Hire Self-Report of Anticipated Needs Survey

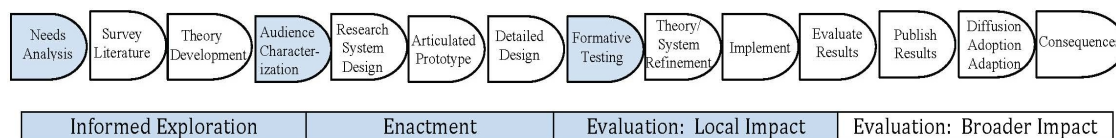


Figure 4.4. Integrative Learning Design and Archival Data Collection

The new-hire survey and data collected from that survey are seen in the ILD stages of informed exploration, enactment, and evaluation. Specific components of the ILD (Figure 4.5) include needs analysis, enactment, and evaluation.

The surveys created for this mentor program evaluation incorporated sections from the publicly available report *SRI International: Examining the Effects of New Teacher Induction* and were modified slightly by adding questions specific to the district program under review. The SRI International instrument gathered data from 39 programs across the state of Illinois in spring 2009, “building upon definitive research demonstrating teacher expertise is a powerful contributor to student learning” (p. 1). I chose this instrument because of the focus on teacher growth and efficacy. When possible, I used the findings from SRI International surveys to compare to local data. The SRI survey samples included 2670 teachers and 1746 mentors with corresponding return rates of 75% and 78% (April 2010, p. 5).

Of the 322 new-hires who attended the district laptop orientation in July of 2013, 253 participated in the New-hire Self-Report of Anticipated Need Survey with a response rate of 79%. Most participants have a 1.0 full time employee status at 98%, and divided quite evenly between elementary (51%) and secondary (49%) assignments. One in four of district new-hires have more than five years of teaching experience, and more than a third of new-hires have a Master’s Degree

or higher. Four out of five new-hires are female, and almost half of the new-hires are under the age of 25. Fifty-one percent of the new-hires in this cohort plan to be in the profession for 10 years or more, while 28% are undecided or unsure at this time. Question nine asked new-hires to indicate the level of support they thought they might need in the areas of curriculum, instructional strategies, classroom management, cultural proficiency, use of data, lesson planning, implementation, and assessment.

Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners was the survey question where one in five new-hires anticipated needing extensive support. Considering the growing ELL population in our community, this response is in alignment with the research context. Moderate support was the level reported by about half of the participants in the majority of the areas. Creating a positive learning environment was an area where participants reported as anticipating minimal support.

Teacher efficacy, as defined by Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (1998), is the judgment of a teacher's capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning. Teachers believing they can control or strongly influence student achievement and motivation are efficacious. The next series of statements inquired about efficacy levels of new teachers. Of the 253 new-hires, 21% disagreed that they have the skills and knowledge to support ELL students, again consistent with the demographic changes in the community and the push for more new-hires to hold ELL certification. For the other 11 questions, more than 80% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they were confident and had the necessary skills to address challenges in instruction and classroom management.

Site-visits

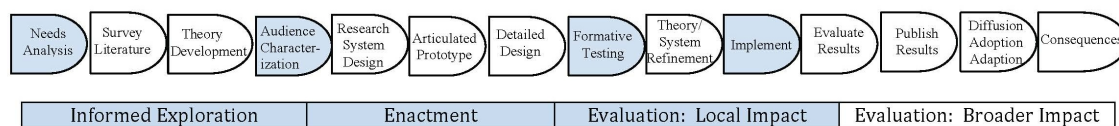


Figure 4.5. Integrative Learning Design and Site Visit Adaptation to Mentor Training

Site-visits during the 2013-2014 school year informed the program review and also propelled buy-in with new-hires, mentors and principals. This activity lives in the ILD components of needs analysis, audience characterization, formative testing, and implementation and their corresponding stages.

Prior to 2008, mentors were required to attend after school training with the professional development specialist to participate in the program. The after-school training and Q&A lasted an hour and counted as one of the requirements of mentor training. The required training was held at each of the six high schools as satellite locations, where mentors to new-hires in the elementary and middle level buildings attended their meetings at the high school that would eventually serve their students. New-hires were not in attendance, so mentors and mentees did not meet to discuss next steps or have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions after reviewing the program expectations together. Meetings were not well attended by mentors, and mentors were irritated they were required to attend the meeting. Often this irritation followed the mentor to the meeting. The attitudes of the disenfranchised mentors would then contaminate the meeting space, impacting the attitudes of the entire group of mentors before, during, and after the meeting. Mentors were frustrated by the lack of feedback they were receiving on the work they did with new-hires and described the mentor

observation paperwork as busywork. The satellite visits were perceived as impersonal and the information mentors received was not valued.

An adaptation, made prior to the timeline of this project, is the implementation of the site visit to connect with stakeholders in smaller groups and better attend to the needs of individual new-hires and their mentors. Bringing together the building principal, new-hires in the building, their mentors and the researcher to build in the “why” we have the program, and “why we are implementing it this way” provides time to ground the group and to secure buy-in from all parties. The importance of the site visit was confirmed during a high school principal interview. Principals shared it was helpful for new-hires to actually meet the person who facilitates the program, and to have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. When one principal in particular shared her experiences with her colleagues, principals began to request more information about the opportunities the mentorship provides. Once principals realized the professional development office provided release time for teachers to observe other teachers of the same content area in different buildings, the news spread quickly, and requests for a Meet and Welcome site visit began.

A total of 37 principals accepted my invitation and arranged site-visits at their buildings and are referred to in the Mentor Guidelines as a Meet and Welcome. Table 4.1 breaks down the number of visits and percentage of total number of buildings at each level.

Table 4.1. Number of Site-visits and Percentage of Total Sites

	Number of Visits	Total Number of Sites	Percent of Schools Visited
Elementary Site-visits	24	39	62%
Middle Level Site-visits	7	11	64%
High School Site-visits	6	6	100%

LPS Mentor Guidelines Bookmark

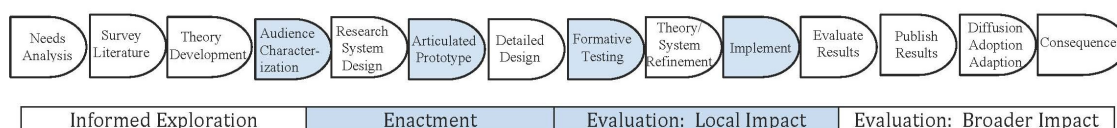


Figure 4.6. Integrative Learning Design and Site Visit Bookmark Mini Agenda

The bookmark was created upon realizing the audience of new-hires, mentors, and principals (audience characterization) would better understand—and in turn would be more likely to take advantage of—the program opportunities (articulated prototype) and observe instruction in action (implementation) if there were a check-off list. The LPS Mentor Guidelines Bookmark lives in the enactment and evaluation stages of the ILD (Figure 4.7).

At each site visit I used the LPS Mentor Guidelines Bookmark as a third point reference and physical reminder of program opportunities, tenure course requirements, and contact information (in case of questions). The bookmark served as a mini agenda for the Meet and Welcome site visit, naming items to be covered and who to contact when questions come up. While the bookmark did not produce data, the site-visits had

an impact on the facilitation of the program, as discussed in the second half of this chapter and in Chapter 5.

LPS Mentor Guidelines Observation Protocol

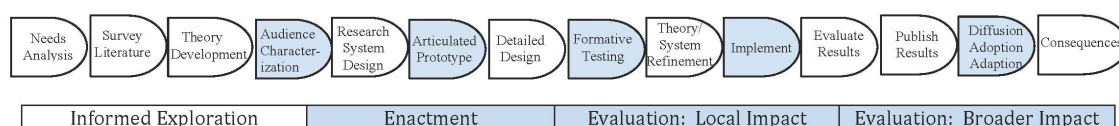


Figure 4.7. Integrative Learning Design and Mentor Guidelines Observation Protocol

Consistent with the ILD paradigm (Figure 4.8), the presentation of findings is not a closure event. The LPS Mentor Guidelines Observation Protocol are a rich data source in this program review. It is this data source where program “adoptions, adaptations and diffusion are the design of this program which could span a decade or more” (Bannan-Ritland, 2003, p. 24). An example of working the dialectic of theory and practice includes learning as much as possible about new-hire/mentor relationships, learning about the current program and how well it serves participants, all the while monitoring and adjusting, following the ILD cycle.

The LPS Mentor Guidelines outline the expectations of the program and are the focus of the site-visits. Data gathered from the mentor paperwork includes requests for feedback in the pre-observation paperwork, coded by Domain (Table 4.2). These data are used to inform professional development planning and learning plan design for the coming cohort of new-hires to the district. In response to the number of requests for Domain 2: Classroom Environment, the professional development office partnered with student services to offer a half-day workshop where new-hires create behavior plans with solid routines and procedures ready to go for the first day of school.

Table 4.2. 2013-2014 Pre-Observation New-Hire Request for Feedback Coded by

District Appraisal Domain

Domain 1: Planning and preparation	
1a. Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy	7
1b. Demonstrating knowledge of students	12
1c. Setting instructional outcomes	0
1d. Demonstrating knowledge of resources	4
1e. Designing coherent instruction	0
1f. Designing student assessments	0
	23
Domain 2: Classroom Environment	
2a. Creating an environment of respect and rapport	6
2b. Establishing a culture for learning	42
2c. Managing classroom procedures	24
2d. Managing student behavior	63
2e. Organizing physical space	24
	159
Domain 3: Instruction	
3a. Communicating with students	
3b. Using questioning and discussion techniques	24
3c. Engaging students in learning	42
3d. Using assessment in instruction	24
3e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness	6
	96
Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities	0
4a. Reflecting on teaching	0

4b. Maintaining Accurate Records	0
4c. Communicating with families	0
4d. Participating in a professional community	0
4e. Growing and developing professionally	0
4f. Demonstrating professionalism	0
Total requests for feedback	278

Principal Interviews

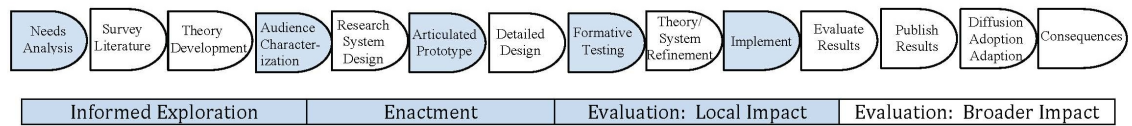


Figure 4.8. Integrative Learning Design and Principal Interviews

Principal interviews were an informed exploration of the program where the audience and the coded mentor observations of new-hire instruction (articulated prototype) in this review provide information on the implementation of the program at the building level. This data source exists in three of the four ILD stages.

Appendix G details the six principal interviews in the Principal Interview Protocol with the eleven interview questions and the level (elementary, middle, or high school). Elementary principals hire two or three new teachers per year, depending upon the number of retirements. Middle level principals add between six and 10 new-hires each year. High school principals hire between seven and 15 new-hires. All of these numbers remain consistent with the reserved seating arrangements from the district welcome breakfast. Principals at the breakfast spend an entire morning facilitating conversations around the mission and vision of the district and what makes each building unique.

All six principals reported the importance of new-hires having mentors. The assignment of mentors depends upon the principal, size of the school, and the skill levels of teachers willing to serve as mentors. Elementary teachers look at grade level teams. Middle level principals try to match content assignments and master teachers with new-hires. High school principals depend upon department chairs to make those matches. Depending upon the curricular area, sometimes the department chair is also the mentor.

A middle level principal described the intentionality behind assigning mentors to new-hires:

I think there's a lot of influence that that mentor can have with the new teacher. And, whether it's a new teacher out of college or a new teacher into the district, LPS has a lot of expectations, depth of knowledge, curriculum, there's just a ton of information and sometimes that can be overwhelming to new teachers. And, I think, sometimes that can come out negative or venting, or just, they're processing through it, and trying to navigate through a complex system.

With a mentor who's positive, I think that helps turn around some of their venting, some of their overwhelming feelings. And, so, they're less likely to get stuck in ruts. The mentor can, you know, just encourage them to stay the course, they'll be OK, and focus on what they have kind of

wrapped their mind around, and then, kind of break it down into pieces. OK, now, you've got this part, now let's move on to the next part.

When considering mentors for new-hires a mentor characteristic four of the six principals shared during the interviews was that the mentor be a good listener:

I would say that probably one of the most effective qualities is being a listener, because when I talk with Jan, our coach to our mentors, a lot of times teachers just need to go and have a sounding board. And, so, really being able to listen, at what is the issue, what's the concern. Do I need to jump in here or do I just need to listen? Or, do I need to help solve the problem. So, I think, probably being a listener is key.

As this principal stated, it's more complex than just listening. The mentor also has to know which leadership hat he or she is wearing at the moment of interacting with a new-hire and to be able to respond appropriately.

Secondary new-hires and mentors generally meet on their own and have little interaction with middle and high school principals. In larger buildings, associate principals and department chairs facilitate the program. The majority of the elementary principals set the Meet and Welcome site visit and facilitate the program. Principals do

not monitor the interactions between the mentor and new-hires or record the time spent working the program.

When asked if the program assisted new-hires in the transition to their building, one principal responded, “In terms of the curriculum, mentors...I think especially, especially with, well, for example, yesterday I happened to be in a classroom where the ELL mentor was meeting with the ELL mentee, the teacher mentee, and so, that opportunity, well, they’re doing a lot, they’re doing that conversation because they’re part of a team together, they’re doing it a little bit more formally because they’re, you know, using that mentor process, so there’s some intentionality about that.”

Principal engagement is critical for the success of a district program. All six of the principals interviewed for this program review actively participate in the mentor program.

2014–2015 End of Semester New-Hire Self-Report Actual Need Survey

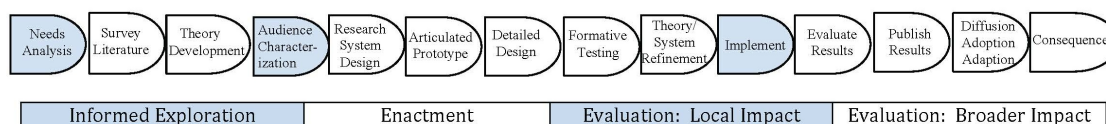


Figure 4.9. Integrative Learning Design and End of Semester New-Hire Self-Report Actual Need

The End of Semester New-hire Self-Report was the second survey completed by new-hires. It sought to identify changes in attitude over the course of the first semester and serves as an informed exploration of the lived new-hire experience and the local impact the program has on program stakeholders.

The End of the Semester New-hire Self-Report Actual Need Survey was sent by email to 309 new-hires at the end of the first semester. The email list was generated from a new-hire payroll sheet. Any new-hire who participated in the new teacher orientation

workshops had to sign-in to be paid. A reminder email was sent two weeks later. Two hundred thirty-four new-hires responded with a response rate of 76%. There are nineteen fewer participants in this sample than there were in the Anticipated Needs survey from July. Even though there were fewer participants, the demographic patterns between the two surveys were similar. Eighty-seven new-hires reported they were assigned a mentor. Of those 87, 61% reported that the dyads completed the mentor observations reflection paperwork. The greatest difference between the July survey and end of semester survey lies with the survey question regarding teacher retention: How long do you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another school? In the first semester, each of the timespans grew with the exception of those who thought they might teach for 10 or more years when new-hires answered the same questions in July. In July, more than half the new-hires surveyed responded they would teach for 10 years or more. Five months later 40% of new-hires, 10% fewer, reported the intention to remain in the profession for 10 years or more. How the realization that teaching is a challenging profession could be a reason for the difference.

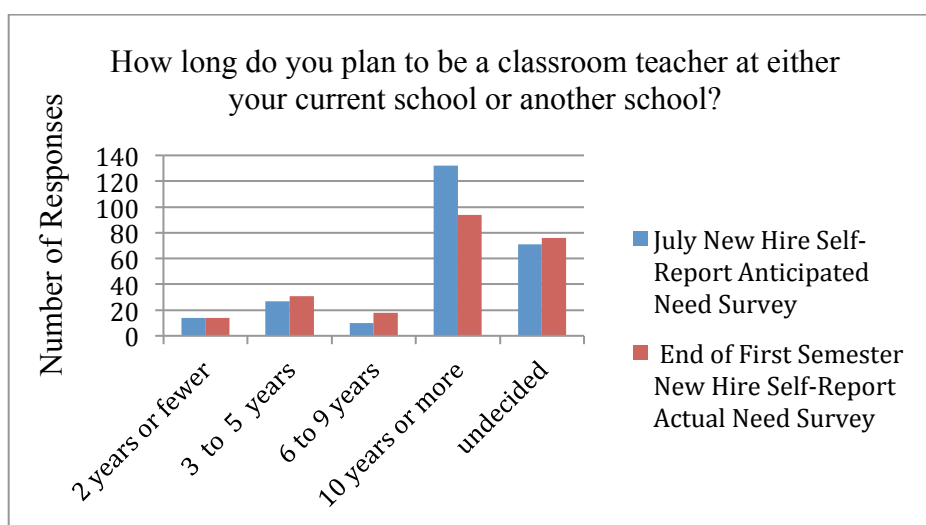


Figure 4.10. New-Hire Anticipated Need to Actual Need Survey Comparison

The data collected for this question for this study are in alignment with the Phases of First Year Teachers' Attitudes Toward Teaching (Figure 4.12) where the months of October through February are months where teachers experience feelings of disillusionment, and could be a potential reason for the change in response on this survey item. While the phases might be true for new-hires, it could be argued that all teachers—new-hires and experienced teachers alike—might have a similar cycle of attitude due to the nature of the academic calendar.

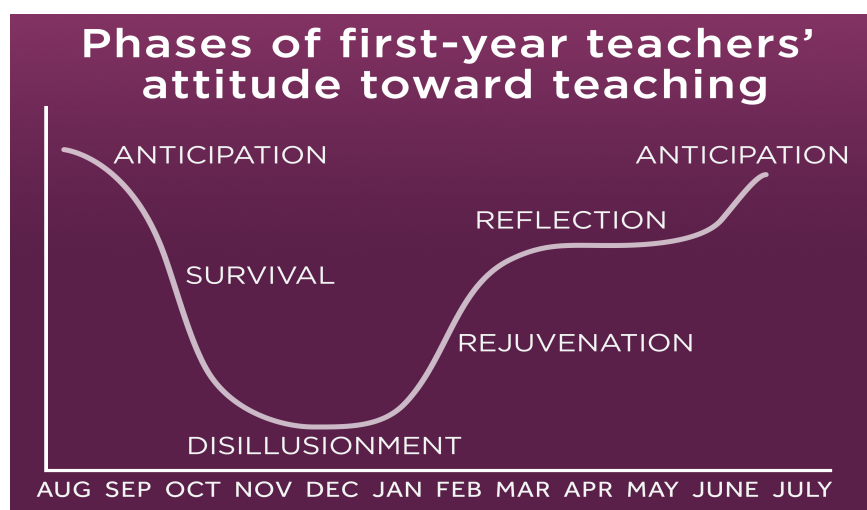


Figure 4.11. Phases of First Year Teaching, Ellen Moir 1999

2014–2014 End of Semester Mentor Report of New-Hire Perceived Need Survey

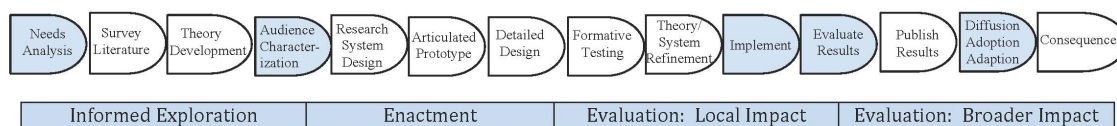


Figure 4.12. Integrative Learning Design and End of Semester Mentor Report of New Hire Perceived Need Survey

The End of Semester Mentor Report of New-Hire Perceived Need Survey is the third data point in understanding the experience of new-hires to the district. This data point lives in all four of the stages of the ILD with more emphasis in the evaluation stages.

The End of Semester Mentor Report of New-hire Perceived Need Survey was sent by email to 214 mentors. The mentor email list was generated as building principals assigned mentors, and confirmed as mentor observation paperwork was received in the professional development office. The district Director of Professional Development assigned an administrative assistant to maintain the spreadsheet cataloging assigned dyads, the stipends paid, and substitute coverage cost. A reminder email was sent out two weeks later. At a response rate of 80%, 172 mentors provided feedback by completing the survey. Seventy-five percent of the mentors who responded have taught for more than eight years. More than half have more than 13 years of experience. Sixty-five percent have a Master's Degree or Master's Degree plus 15 credits or more. One of the 172 mentors had a Ph.D. Almost 90% of mentors were female, with an age range that was evenly distributed in the 25–34 and 35–44 age groups with 30% for both. The 45–54 age range was at 24%. It could be that, due to technology initiatives, principals are intentionally looking for teachers who use technology in their daily practice to mentor new-hires. The age range of mentors who might have grown up with and are comfortable using this technology is reflected in these data.

Being a new-hire in a large district is a challenging and sometimes daunting assignment at any age. The demands of being new are evident in the change in response to “how long do you plan to be a classroom teacher” question from July to the end of the

semester (Figure 4.11). Teacher retention dominates the literature with the concern that teachers are leaving the profession in droves (Ingersoll, 2003). Comparing the teacher attitudes in regard to retention intention between new-hires in July, filled with anticipation and excitement for the school year to begin, to the new-hire attitudes at the end of the semester in January, at a time of disillusionment, and adding the responses of mentors to the same retention question is interesting because even though an experienced teacher understands and anticipates the disillusionment stage, 59% responded with 10 years or more. Mentors reported they planned to remain in education for 10 years or more in greater numbers than the new-hires, even though the mentors have fewer years to reaching retirement. Twenty percent of mentors reported being undecided at this time about their retention intentions. Are the 34 “retention intention undecided” mentors the same 23 people who fall in the close to retirement age group of 55–64? What might be some of the reasons a new-hire or a mentor might be undecided about their retention intentions?

Another area of interest illuminated by this study is how to move the group of teachers who are undecided (Figure 4.14), to the 10 or more years column. As we build capacity in our teaching force, what role might an efficacious mentor have on a new-hire to help them learn to love the challenge of complex systems such as education and remain in the profession?

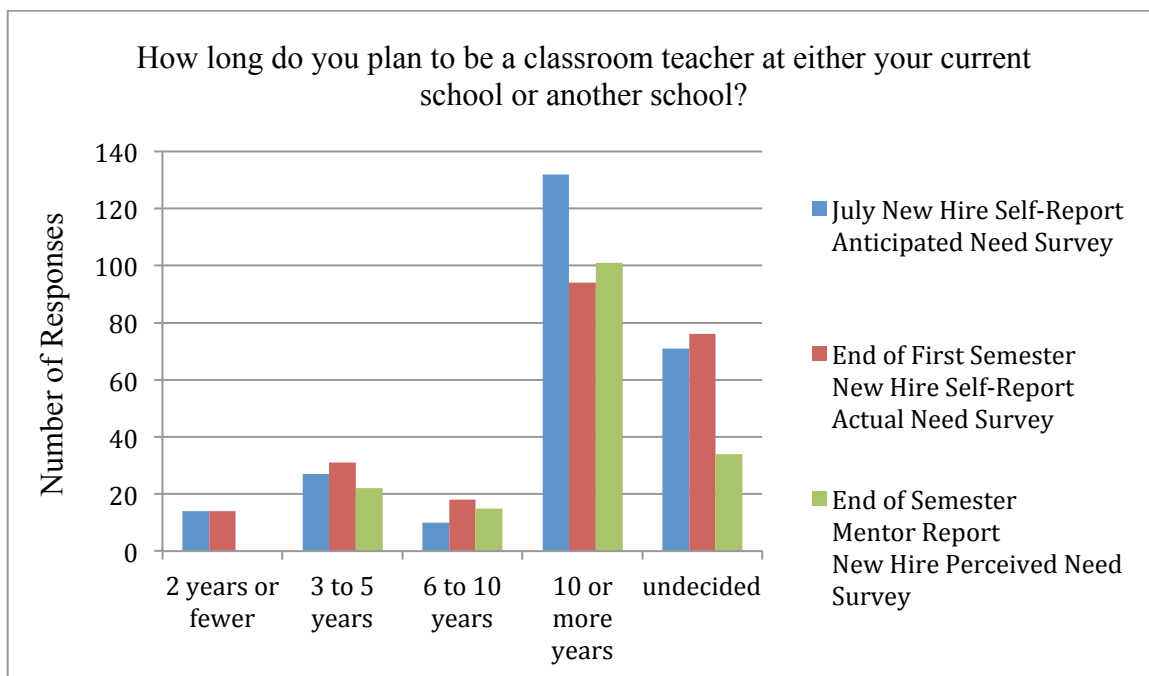


Figure 4.13. New-Hire Anticipated Needs to Actual Needs to Mentor Report of Perceived needs Survey Comparison

Almost half of the mentors in this program review are serving as mentors for the first time. The other half have served as a mentor in this district anywhere from two years to 25 years, and work with one new-hire. Fewer than 10% of the mentors in this cohort were assigned more than one new-hire as a mentee.

The first half of Chapter 4 details a chronological presentation of data in the manner it was collected. In the second half, data are presented by research question.

Data Analysis by Research Question

Question 1: What was the experience of a new-hire in a rapidly growing district?

The New-hire End of Semester Survey sought information about the experiences of new-hires after the completion of the semester. 204 of the 234 or 87% of new-hires reported to have been assigned a mentor. Thirty of the new-hires responded not having

the support of a mentor during the first semester. If we assume those thirty new-hires were all 1.0 FTE secondary teachers with full classes. Five classes each day with 30 or more students is an average course load for secondary teachers in this district. At one hundred fifty students per unsupported new-hire, the possible number of students impacted is around 4,500 students during the 2014–2015 school year.

For the new-hires with assigned mentors, the length of time mentors and new-hires met and the frequency with which they met varied. More than half of the dyads met formally a few times to a few times a month. On an informal basis, 70% new-hires reported to have met with their mentor several times per week to daily for approximately 30 minutes.

The Mentor End-of-First Semester Survey sought information about the experiences of new-hires as perceived by mentors in terms of level of support the mentor provided. One hundred seventy-two of the 215 mentors responded to the survey; 60% reported meeting with new-hires weekly or more than once a week. Trends in elementary mentor observation paperwork show elementary dyads are often on the same grade level team, spending time together planning on a daily basis. Secondary teachers are generally in the same department; at the high school level the mentor could also be the department chair.

When considering the level of support mentors provided to new-hires, one of five mentors reported providing extensive support to new-hires and more than half of the 172 mentors reported that she or he provided moderate support in the curriculum for the new-hire teaches. When the same prompt was given to new-hires, the level of support new-hires reported as needed as considerably lower. I anticipated a difference (Figure 4.15) in

perceived new-hire support needed and perceived mentor provided support, knowing there is some “bliss” in “not knowing what one does not know,” and that new-hires might under report out of naivety—or fear the consequences of not having the skills necessary to perform tasks as expected. Another consideration might be that mentors are over-reporting the support they provide. A question that arises during data analysis is how do mentors and new-hires define “support?” Minimal support could come in assisting with organizational tasks preparing for a lesson or unit the new-hire might be teaching for the first time. Support could also be as extensive as scaffolding a lesson or unit, breaking big ideas down into smaller, more digestible chunks for the new-hire, and also for students.

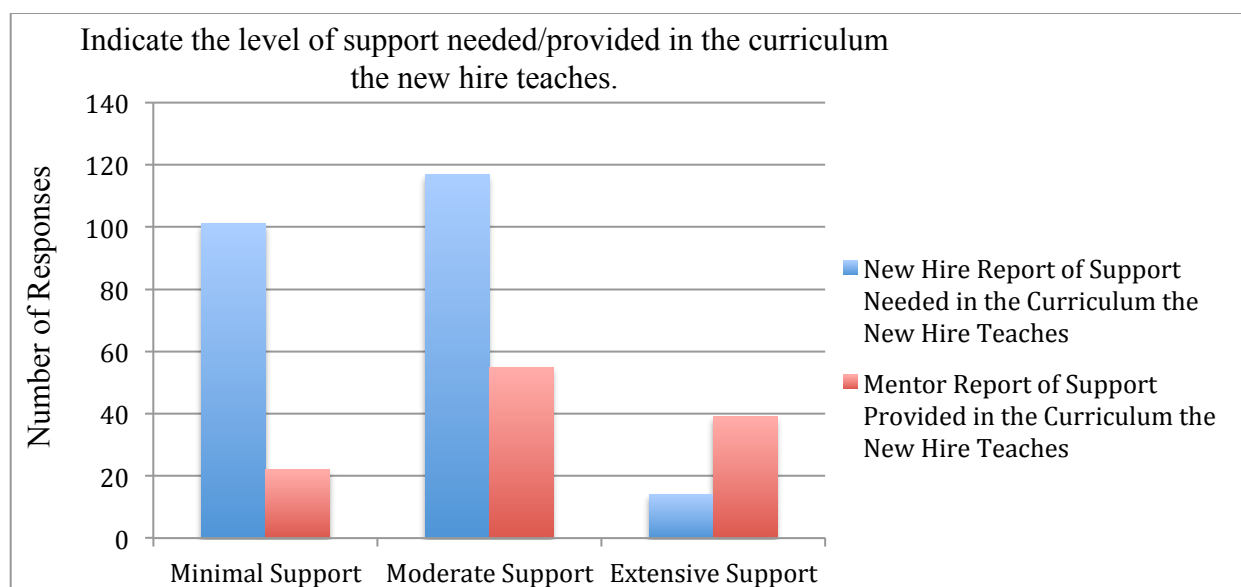


Figure 4.14. New-Hire Report of Needed Support to Mentor Report of Support Provided in the Curriculum the New-hire Teachers

Another insight to the new-hire experience from this survey comparison is that 14 of the 234 new-hires reported needing extensive support over the course of the semester. In turn, 39 mentors reported providing extensive support to new-hires. Fourteen new-hires reported needing extensive support where 39 mentors said they provided extensive

support. The number of new-hires who reported needing minimal support was much higher than anticipated. Considering more than 60 new-hires came to the district with more than four years of experience, it is possible that the new-hires with experience did not need much support. On the other hand, the number of mentors reporting to have provided moderate and minimal support could account for 77 of the 101 new-hires who reported needing minimal support.

Going back to the 30 new-hires reporting not having a mentor, add the 39 who were reported as needing extensive support by their mentor. Again, if all 69 new-hires were secondary teachers (in this cohort there were 161 secondary teachers, so it is a possibility), and each new-hire had a full course load with full classes, then each new-hire could have around 150 students. Now we have missed an opportunity to positively impact the instruction of—and in turn potentially the learning of—more than 10,000 of the nearly 20,000 secondary students in this district.

The support new-hires receive fractals quickly throughout the district impacting the culture of teaching and learning for students, new-hires, mentors and principals alike. When a stakeholder shares an experience that was not well received, the negative fractal damages institutional trust between buildings and the district office. In turn, when stakeholders feel supported and share thoughtful and intentional educational experiences, the news travels quickly. One example of news traveling quickly is the introduction of the LPS Instructional Framework at the Welcome Breakfast. Immediately following the breakfast, 27 of the 63 principals requested the framework to use with teachers in their buildings the following week. Principals are key players in the success of any district, critical in creating a supportive environment at the building level.

During the principal focus interviews, two principals reported using the Mentor Observational Protocol as a recommendation to the number of times to meet, two principals met more often and used the mentor program site visit as the topic of the first building meeting for new-hires. One of the high school principals describes the new-hire experience from the building perspective,

... the more support we can give those new teachers, the better off they're going to be in the long run. I can't imagine, if we didn't have supports in place, if we weren't meeting with our new teachers through September and October, if we didn't have a first initial meeting with just them, that our administrative team holds a dinner the night of, if we didn't have those types of things in place, you know, they, they struggle in the beginning as it is. I can't imagine how much they would struggle without the supports put in place for them. And, having that person to lean on just makes their day and their start to their educational and teaching career that much better.

None of the six principals monitor the amount of time mentors and new-hires spend together. The most important principal task was finding the right match for the new-hire to build strong relationships with team and department members. Elementary principals appear to have fewer choices for matches than secondary principals due to building size.

So, that was an example of a grade level team that was really young. And, so I used somebody that was outside the department and looked for somebody that was on the same team that was a master teacher. Yup, so they could still go out and look for what effective teaching looks like, and know how to work with kids.

The relationship between the two is critical to the success of the mentorship. A high school principal described the mentor as, “a soul that when you go to, and you’re struggling, and you go to, you’re going to get good advice, and you’re going to get a good example from them.”

Guarded time for new-hires and mentors is critical for new-hire and mentor engagement can result in deep conversations around lesson planning and design. The largest discrepancy between the perceived need of new-hires and perceived support provided by mentors is in the Domain 1: Planning and Preparation of Instruction. Guaranteed and viable curricula in a large district are often canned and scripted and come in complete packages. A new-hire might assume the planning has been done for him or her. This is an area of concern for the researcher. Adaptations focused in the appraisal domains of instructional planning and preparation are appropriate and should be addressed in the next ILD iteration.

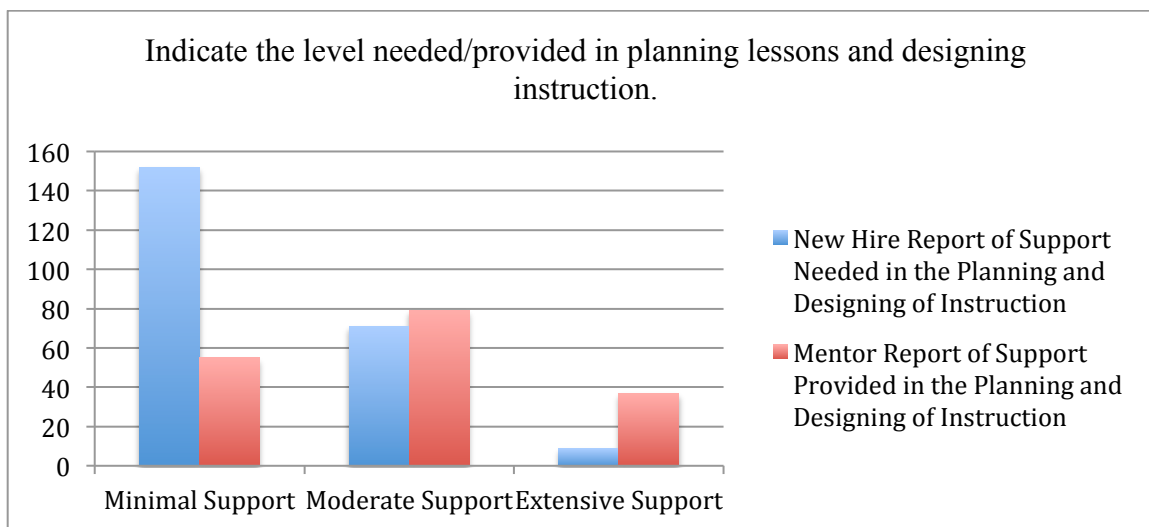


Figure 4.15. New-Hire Report of Needed Support to Mentor Report of Support Provided

Due to the nature of the appraisal structure, new-hires do not receive the same amount of feedback in Domain 1: Planning and Preparation as they do in Domains 2: Classroom Environment, and 3: Instruction by the nature of the appraisal structure. Evidence of planning is not as obvious and considered an “off-stage” domain. Classroom management and instruction are considered “on-stage” domains, meaning the appraiser observes behaviors in action. Evidence of planning and preparation is a pre-observation conversation between the mentor and the new-hire.

Mimicking the district appraisal process, mentors observe new-hires as part of the mentor program. In the pre-observation conversations, mentors and new-hires discuss the lesson objective, anticipate when students might need extra support (and have a plan in place to meet the needs of all of the students in the class), monitoring and adjusting as students learn the material. The mentor paperwork is coded by request for feedback by the new-hire according to the Danielson Framework. The high number of requests for support in Domain: 2 Classroom Environment, might indicate classroom management is

a professional goal or is at the very least on the mind of the new-hire when thinking about the mentor observation.

New-hires, mentors, and principals experience the mentor program differently. These lived experiences are highly dependent upon the collaborative efforts of the district office and building principals.

Question 2: How efficacious do new-hires feel?

The 12 prompts seeking new-hire levels of efficacy in July and again in January did not see much change over the course of the semester. In July, more than half of the respondents reported agreement with the efficacy statements in regard to curriculum, classroom management, cultural proficiency, ELL students, special education, student engagement, reflection on instruction, and assessment practices. The four prompts with the greatest changes were in the areas of curriculum, creating a positive learning environment, assessment strategies, and adaptation of instruction to meet student needs (Figure 4.17). Fourteen percent of new-hires have more than 13 years of experience. This might lead one to believe that experienced new-hires might be more confident than a new-hire without previous experience. The same four efficacy prompts from the January survey (Figure 4.18) illustrate the attitude change in new-hires report about being confident in their ability to teach.

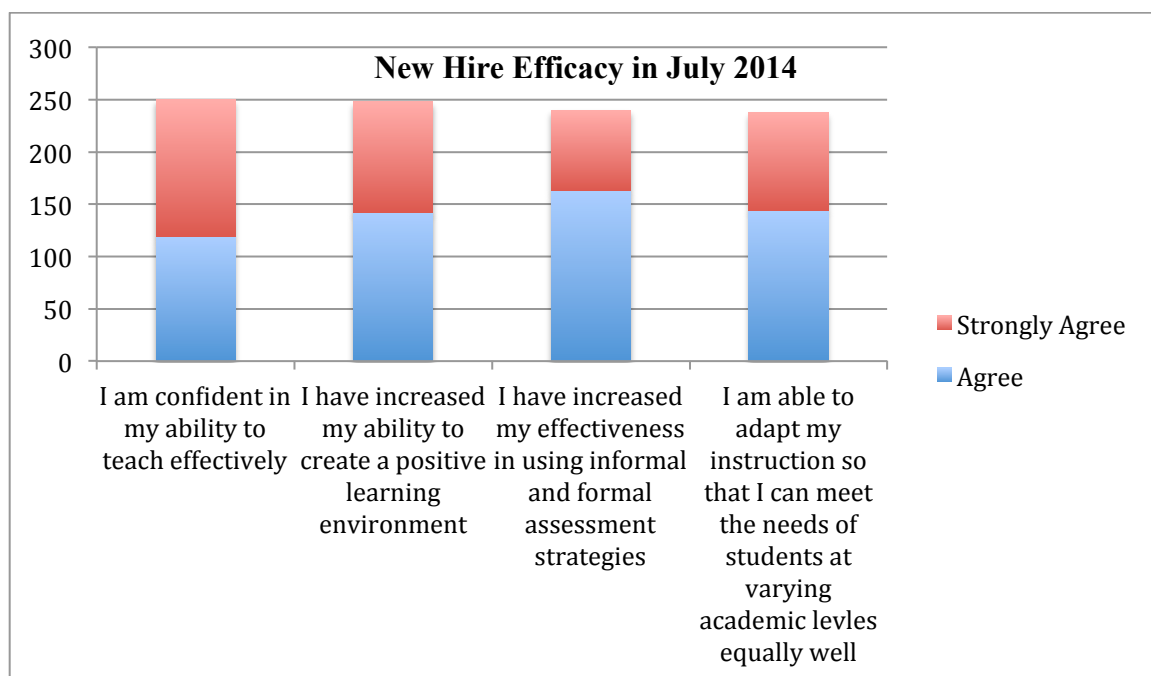


Figure 4.16. New-Hire Efficacy July Report

The number of new-hires who were confident in creating a positive learning environment decreased by 27 over the semester. Twenty-three fewer new-hires responded to being confident in using formal and informal assessment strategies. Confidence in the ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of students dropped from 94 new-hires to 60 new-hires.

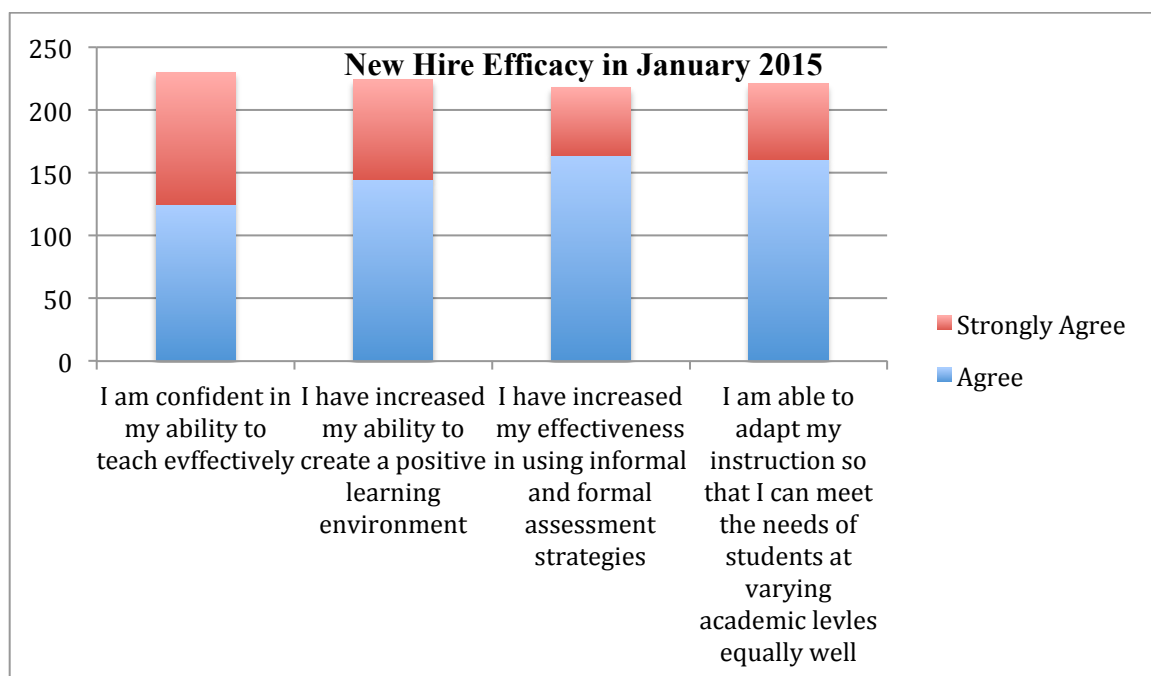


Figure 4.17. New-Hire Efficacy January Report

Possible reasons for the decline in efficacy for new-hires in these areas are due to the new-hires' enthusiasm to begin their careers in July and the subsequent realization of the challenges of teaching and learning to teach.

A missed opportunity here was in not asking mentors their perception of efficacy in the new-hire with whom the mentor worked in the End of Semester Mentor Report of New-hire Perceived Need Survey.

Question 3: How satisfied are new-hires, mentors, and principals with the support provided by the district?

The End of Semester New-hire Self-Report (Appendix H) sought the extent to which the mentor program supported the new-hire in the content area taught, instructional techniques, classroom management, parent interactions, adapting instruction for students, ELL instructional strategies, analyzing data, formal and informal assessment practices,

and reflection upon instruction. Forty percent of new-hires reported the mentor program deepened their understanding of the subject matter the new-hire teaches; increased knowledge of instructional techniques; increased the ability to create a positive learning environment; and use data assessment strategies.

An increase in skill might not be considered satisfying. Satisfaction can sometimes be equated with being clear about expectations. For the role of the mentor, 70% of mentors reported to be clear on the program expectations. The same number of mentors agreed the initial Meet and Welcome, arranged by the building principal, was sufficient to get started and that they did not need extra support. Sixty-seven percent of the mentors said they would participate in on-going professional development to better support new-hires to their building. Seventy-two mentors reported the program has assisted in developing mentoring skills.

Almost 85% of mentors reported to have completed the mentor observation and reflection paperwork, whereas 60% of new-hires reported submitting the paperwork. This survey question answered a question of participation in the program and not about the satisfaction with the program.

When asked about mentor support impacting a new-hire's first year in the district (Figure 4.19), mentors reported at 83% that the support provided impacted their first year in the district.

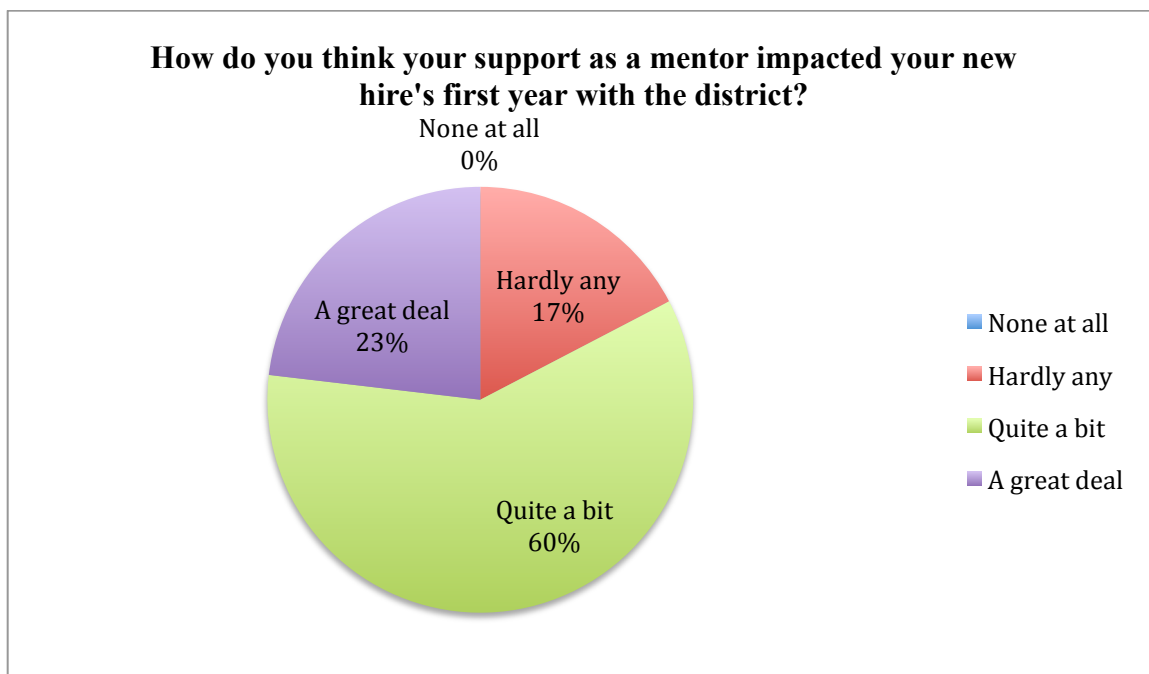


Figure 4.18. Mentor Perception of Mentor Impact on New-hire

The Principal Focus Interview is where satisfaction was the most notable. An aspect of the mentor program that did not get the visibility and therefore the participation it deserved is the off site visit for new-hires and mentors to go to another building to watch another teacher teach. Getting in front of principals, marketing the opportunities the professional development office could provide, is an example of a tiny event having a large impact. As shared by a high school principal during a focus interview:

One thing that we've all, all thought about, and, and you mentioned it when you came out, I think that new teachers need to get out and see other individuals, and have time to see other individuals. Yes, they know what's going on in their building, but they need to go observe other people. They need to see as many classrooms as...maybe, I know

it's hard for release time and those kind of things, but allow our new teachers to go see quality teaching and what goes into quality teaching and talk to those individuals and things like that.

An elementary principal responds to a concern about lack of communication regarding program opportunities:

Here's what I'll say...is I think the program is good. I think that the support you give it, just coming out and talking to people, I think the documentation that's available to us, I don't think as, you know, a fourth year principal, that I realized the impact until, like, this year went, oh, my gosh, I have all these new people, we can't just let them flounder, we can't just let them, we have to make sure that we're very intentional about that. I don't know as a new principal, while I knew the program was there, I don't know that I really recognized the importance of it. I know I wasn't as intentional about it. I had new staff those first couple of years that I was principal, but didn't do a good job of making sure that mentor matches happened and making sure that...So, I, I think that, at least from a personal perspective, I didn't use the program the first couple years I was principal.

As was indicated, not only do new teachers need mentors, this elementary principal also feels a mentor program for new principals might be in order in the district.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what it is like entering a new school district and teaching position through the lived experiences of new-hires, mentors, and principals. This chapter presented the data and findings from a review of archives, three surveys, mentor observations/new-hire reflections, and one-on-one focus interviews with principals. Data were presented and analyzed according to the Integrative Learning Design paradigm in chronological order throughout the first half of the chapter, and organized by research question in the second half of the chapter.

Chapter 5

"Creating the necessary spaces where educators' practices can be developed and nurtured, problems of practice examined as challenges and opportunities, and greater agency for teachers claimed, thereby furthering student learning" is the vision and mission of CPED (2014). This program design provided me, as a scholarly practitioner, the opportunity to develop language and practices that promote positive change in education that impacts student achievement. Working the dialectic of theory and practice, "formalizing my curiosity by poking, and prying with a purpose" (Neale Hurston, 1942), to better serve students, teachers and principals, is my problem of practice.

Design Implications

Revitalizing and changing induction programs to better serve teachers, students, and schools is the aim of this applied research. I examine the implications of the three surveys; reflections from mentors and new-hires on classroom observational experiences; and principal interview data for the design, implementation, and evolution of the mentor program in review. The data collected for this mentor program review address the research questions:

1. What was the mentor program experience of new-hires, mentors, and principals in a rapidly growing district?
2. How efficacious did new-hires feel?
3. How satisfied are new-hires, mentors, and principals with the support provided by the district?

What follows is a description of the artifacts, activities, and structures that were created or modified within the design research model and then implemented in the following iteration of the mentor program annual cycle.

The design-based research method proposed by Bannan-Ritland (2003), Integrative Learning Design (ILD), allows researchers to look at a range of interventions including artifacts, activities, scaffolds, and curriculum. A fascinating characteristic of the ILD is that one never arrives; there is always something else to be learned and, in turn, always something to be adapted, refined, and implemented again. Keeping identity and what is important (supporting new-hires) at the very center of the mission and vision while adapting to change—refining program structures and support along the way—is the focus of program growth and development. Adaptations, adoptions, and diffusion occur in the evaluation stage of the ILD, and are critical components of change facilitation and effective change leadership. Since change is the objective of the adaptations, it seems fitting to include here the adaptations implemented upon completion of formative testing of the evaluation stage of the ILD. Even though this chapter will end, adaptations continue and should continue for the span of the program.

Adaptations, Iterations, and Evolution

Showcased in this chapter are adaptations made to the mentor program, based on the data collected and presented in Chapter 4, and addressing research questions for this study. It is not possible to cover all of the adaptations made during the mentor program review in this dissertation, therefore I have chosen the adaptations showing evidence of impact during implementation. The adaptations featured have had the most impact on the

design of the beginning of the year new-hire professional development experience and the mentorship experience.

The adaptations that follow are either adaptations made to a prototype as described in Chapters 3 and 4, or are a new prototype created and informed by data collected, organized, and integrated back into the ILD model in the components of needs analysis, theory development, and audience characterization. The program continues to evolve as the adaptation goes through the informed exploration and enactment stages.

LPS Instructional Framework

Running parallel to this project is my role as World Language Curriculum Specialist. Building coherency among and between the different tasks asked of teachers through an instructional lens is my daily work. A new prototype (ILD: Enactment Stage) for this program grew from one of the tasks handed to district curriculum specialists by the Director of Instruction in the 2013–2014. The task was to create an instructional framework for the district (teachers, principals, HR, etc.) to use as reference, bringing together all of the instructional strategies from all of the most recent district supported professional development workshops, salary advancement courses, and visiting experts. Thus building a common language around instruction, restricted to a two-sided sheet of paper, in one place where teachers and principals could turn to during conversations centered around instruction.

After working collaboratively with the entire district curriculum department for 10 months, district curriculum specialists came to consensus on using the 5Es Teaching and Learning Model, designed by Richard Bybee (1990) with the intent of providing an instructional sequence that would help teachers plan and prepare in an intentional

manner. Once consensus was achieved, the Art Curriculum Specialist and I made adaptations to the 5Es creating an advance organizer, incorporating language from current district instructional initiatives such as *Classroom Instruction That Works 2nd Edition* (CITW2) (2012), Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol (1999), and Explicit Instruction (2011). The LPS Instructional Framework (Figure 5.1) includes research and best practices, emphasizing the connections between effective practices for teachers and students. Curriculum specialists shared the LPS Instructional Framework with teachers and principals throughout the 2015–2016 school year, during district- and building-required professional development sessions. While this framework did not come directly from finding from this research study, it represents an example of a large district attempting to create coherency among and between the many instructional initiatives in the district. At the Welcome Breakfast in July of 2016, the LPS Instructional Framework served as the place setting at the reserved seat for each of the 444 new-hires and their principals. The place setting was a third point reference for new-hires and principals to use as a conversational tool around each Domain as the Domains were presented during the morning program.

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The 5Es Teaching and Learning Model is the foundation of the LPS Instructional Framework. Classroom Instruction that Works Second Edition (CITW2), Explicit Instruction, and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) are research-based instructional strategies that provide common language around a shared vision of enhancing instructional practice and professional learning. Professional Learning Communities and instructional conversations between and among educators using this common language will impact student achievement.

Please note that any 5E, CITW2, Explicit Instruction, or SIOP strategy could be used at any point in a lesson. The strategies listed below are merely suggestions to share ideas when planning a lesson or unit.

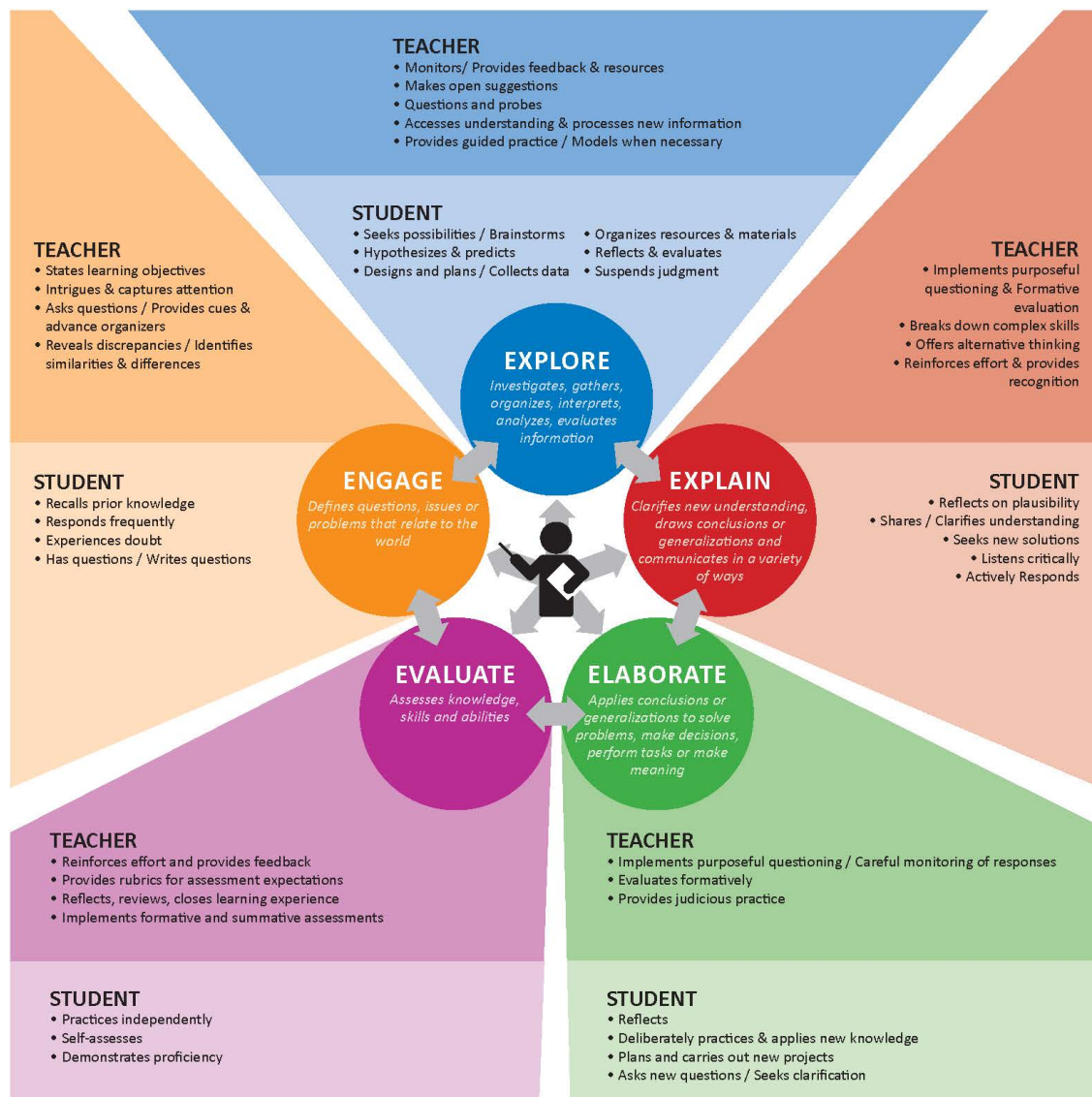


Figure 5.1. LPS Instructional Framework

LPS INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Lincoln Public Schools Instructional Framework includes the research and best practices in education, such as those listed below, in order to provide quality instruction and high levels of student learning. As you look at the information summarized below, you will see familiar concepts emphasizing connections between effective practices for teachers and students. LPS has chosen to synthesize the strongest research-based strategies to meet the unique needs of our students.

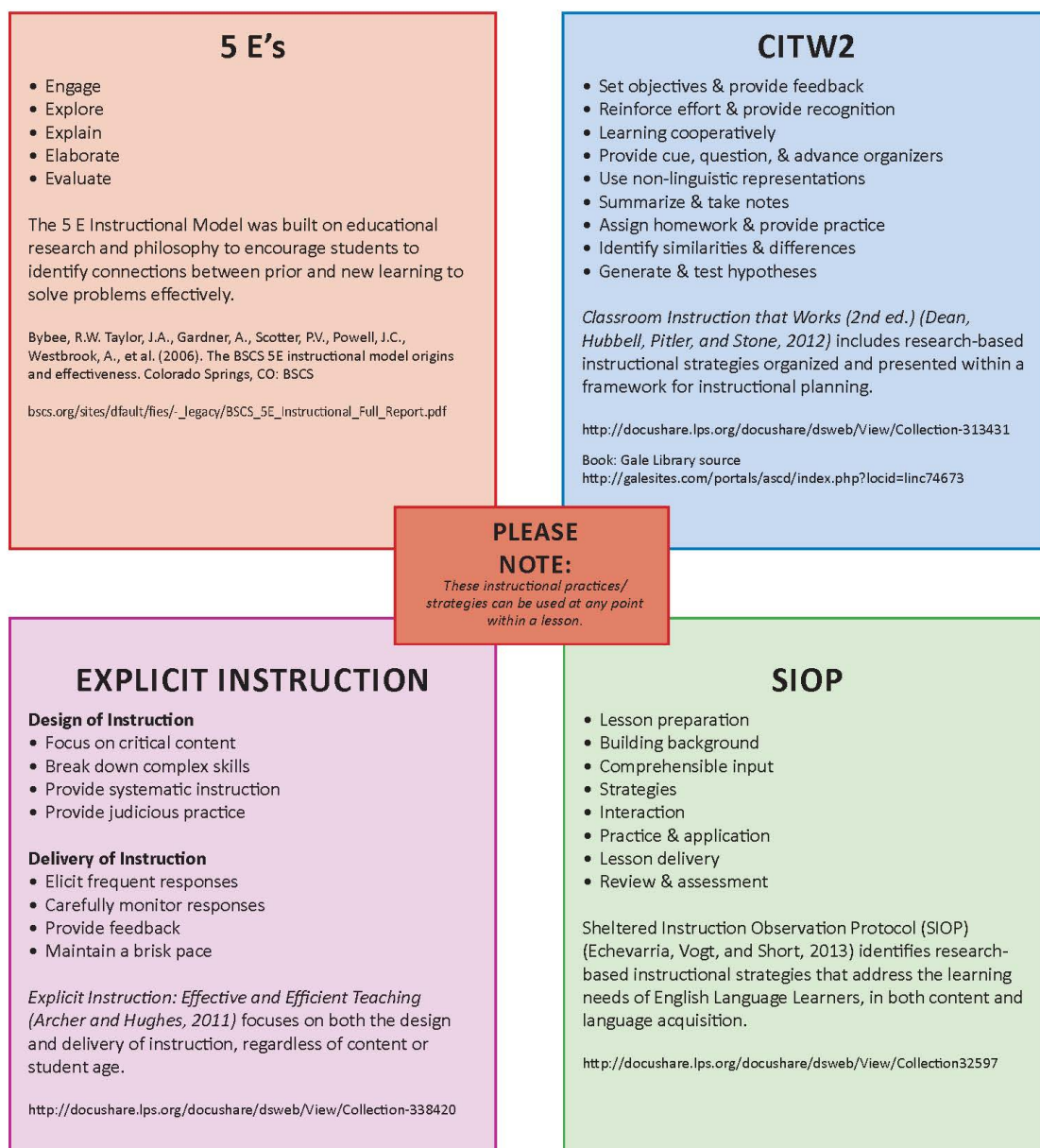


Figure 5.1. LPS Instructional Framework Continued

Welcome Breakfast

Adaptations to the Welcome Breakfast, an annual district sponsored event, changed the morning program significantly due to the data gathered from mentor observation paperwork highlighting the interest in the domains relating to classroom management and instruction. Feedback from principals also indicated an interest in moving towards instructional conversations with a growth mindset focus for the morning program. Ten years ago principals arrived at the Welcome Breakfast very early to reserve enough seating for their cohort of new-hires. When a principal with a large group of new-hires arrived late, the group was dispersed to random tables. Sometimes the dispersed new-hire ate breakfast with people she or he might not see again, not connecting to new colleagues in the same building or the principal. The start of the morning was chaotic for everyone. New-hires did not always know what their principal looked like. Principals were in the same awkward position. After interviewing four candidates per posted position, for some principals that means more than 80 interviews. It is easy to forget the names and faces of all of the teachers hired among the crowd of those who were not hired. The focus at the start of the morning for principals was on reserving seats when it should have been on welcoming new staff with a calm and smiling face for an invigorating morning of conversation around teaching and learning for students and teachers. A simple change from *find a seat* to assigned seating made huge gains with principals. Smiling, happy principals, greeting their new-hires set the stage for an intentionally interactive morning.

In January of 2016, I pitched the idea of framing the Welcome Breakfast program with the appraisal domains to the Executive Committee (Associate Superintendent of

Instruction and the Directors of Instruction, Evaluation, and Assessment; Computing Services; Library Media Services; Special Education; and Federal Programs), sharing the feedback from principals and mentor observation paperwork to support this change in the program. Tightening the structures meant anchoring the conversations between principals and new-hires in the Appraisal Domains and providing the space and time to make sure it happened. Preparing the space and time for deep conversations requires impeccable attention to detail. Tightening the structures of the event meant determining how many teachers were hired for each building and creating a seating chart for the ballroom to lower the level of disequilibrium for everyone as they arrived in the morning. Reserved seating for 500 can be challenging. Joining like groups (elementary, middle, high school, Title buildings, special education, etc.) with smaller numbers at the same table is a complex puzzle requiring extreme lines of open communication with principals. Schools with more than nine new-hires require two administrators. The second administrator leads the instructional dialogue at the second table. Tightening structures also meant considering the complex system to effectively communicate with all stakeholders.

With structures tightened, the 2016 Welcome Breakfast program was built upon introducing the Domains (Danielson, 2012) to new-hires, each of the four presented by the director most associated with that Domain. The next step for the Welcome Breakfast morning program from the Appraisal Domains was to introduce district departments according to the Domain with which they were most directly connected. The Director of Professional Learning and Continuous Improvement who facilitates the school improvement process introduced the four domains, modeling the CITW2 strategies and

engaging the entire room of 450 with an activity where new-hires used their fingers to demonstrate understanding of the Appraisal Domains: Domain 1: Planning and Preparation was introduced by the Director of Instruction, where group collaborative processing strategies were modeled as the domain was presented. The Director of Students Services and the Director of Special Education introduced Domain 2: Classroom Environment. The Director of Instruction addressed Domain 3: Instruction, using the LPS Instructional Framework as a third point reference for focused conversations around instruction. This time allowed new-hires to engage in relationship building with new colleagues and building leadership, ask clarifying questions, and learn about the district mission and vision as well as district leadership. Domain 4: Professional Responsibility was introduced by the Associate Superintendents of Instruction and Human Resources who asked new-hires and principals to hand their phones over to the person on their right. That quickly focused the group's attention around the topic of social media. A challenge of this adaptation is setting the structures in place for the Directors and Associate Superintendents for a four-hour, collaboratively created, thoughtful and engaging morning program. The morning moved quickly. Principals, directors, and the morning program presenters were released after the Welcome Breakfast morning program. New-hires continued the day with a full agenda.

On the afternoon following the 2016 Welcome Breakfast, principals returned to their offices to prepare for the start of school. During that principal work time, my office received 18 requests (phone calls and emails) for the LPS Instructional Framework from building principals for use in professional development activities as they welcomed teachers back to school. As I make my Meet and Welcome site visit rounds this fall, I see

the LPS Instructional Framework posted around buildings in teacher planning centers, the main office, and production rooms; evidence it was well-received and is in use across the district.

When creating the 5Es adaptation, I did not realize its power or potential. At the time the LPS Instructional Framework was shared at the building level, I had not considered using it during district new-hire events. Reflecting upon systems thinking theory has confirmed for me that small events can have a tremendous impact, and that you do not need to touch everyone to make a difference (Garmston & Wellman, 2013). I look forward to seeing where the LPS Instructional Framework goes from here as it continues to pass through the ILD cycle of continuous improvement.

Professional Connections

Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners was the survey question where one in five new-hires anticipated needing extensive support. In response to this survey item, at the 2014-2015 school year during Professional Connections, a 3.5-hour workshop titled *ELL Essentials* was offered to regular classroom teachers. during the two full pre-contract days where curriculum specialists and teacher leaders present and provide curriculum for new-hires,. Unfortunately the new ELL teachers perceived this title as a course they should attend rather than be an area of expertise and certification for them. In response to the poor title experience, the workshop was retitled to *ELL Essentials for the Classroom Teacher* and offered again as part of the 2015-2016 Professional Connections experience.

Meet and Welcome Site-Visit

I am presently using the LPS Instructional Framework as a conversational tool in the Fall 2016 Meet and Welcome site visits to frame the conversation around professional goal setting. Teachers must submit professional goals by October 15th each year according to the professional agreement. Creating observational experiences supporting the professional goals, and seeing research-based instructional strategies in action are essential for teachers to learn and grow. Reflecting upon those experiences is critical to teachers organizing and integrating what is learned into his or her daily practice. During our Meet and Welcome conversations I reinforce the intent of the mentor program in supporting new-hires. I also reinforce the importance of using the exact same professional goals for the mentor program as the actual appraisal process with their building administrator or principal, so new-hires can practice the language of appraisal with mentors prior to their first appraisal with their building administrator or principal.

The Meet and Welcome site visit is where relationships are built, and where buy-in is earned by new-hires, mentors, and principals. My goal of getting to all 63 buildings prior to the end of the first quarter has not yet reached fruition. I facilitated Meet and Welcome site visits at 35 of the 61 buildings in the fall of 2014 prior to October 10th, the last day of the quarter. One elementary school did not have a new-hire in 2014. All of the other buildings ranged from two to 23 new educators. It was in these small group meetings where I learned we needed a way to build coherency around the “why” of the mentor program. Teachers needed structures in place for them to work smarter, not harder. When a new-hire or a mentor perceived the program as one more thing to do, the meeting did not go well and the mentorship usually followed that same pattern. I needed

an intervention to ensure the Meet and Welcome went well, inspiring educators to organize and integrate the experience into their daily work. When I began using the bookmark as a mini agenda, focusing the conversation around observational experiences, sharing my interest in working with new-hires and my intent for the mentor paperwork, participation in the program increased. This is evidenced in the cost of mentor stipends and professional release time for off site visits.

Mentoring Program Guidelines

Adaptations made to the LPS Mentoring Program Guidelines were made in response to clarifying questions from new-hires, mentors, principals, and the administrative assistant supporting the program. Adaptations made for new-hires and mentors organized the three observational experiences, clarifying which ones mentors were paid for facilitating and

Lincoln Public Schools Observational Experiences Planning Template

Mentor	<p>"Adults do not learn from experience. They learn from processing experiences." - John Dewey</p>		
New Hire			
Building:			
Assignment			

Domain Based Professional Goal:

Building Based School Improvement Professional Goal:

Potential Resources	LPS Mentor Program		Pair-Shared Observation
Mentor	<p>Observational Experience 1</p> <p>Class Coverage Provided \$175 Stipend to Mentor</p>	<p>Observational Experience 2</p> <p>Class Coverage Provided \$175 Stipend to Mentor</p>	<p>A shared experience with a mentor or instructional coach in another building.</p> <p>Half-day Substitute Provided No Stipend</p>
Professional Connections			
Principal			
Professional Organizations & Publications			

For Substitute Arrangements or Class Coverage contact LPS Executive Secretary for Professional Development

Participate in the experience, pose questions, and try something new.

Reflection & Next Steps for Teaching and Learning

What will you do with the information you learned from each experience?

Fall 2016

Figure 5.2. LPS Mentor Guidelines Advance Organizer for Professional Goal Planning

which one was paid release time. Modeling the use of *Classroom Instruction That Works 2nd Edition*, strategies, an advance organizer is introduced on the second page (Figure 5.2). This is a resource for mentors and new-hires to use to focus the three observational experiences on the professional goals set by the new-hire, to be used as evidence in later appraisal conversations. I share that I am modeling the strategies teachers and principals are expected to use in their own instruction.

Adaptations made for principals include a closer look at the structure of the off site visit. Where was the dyad going to observe? What are the expectations for the reflection after the observation? Who guides the reflective conversation? The program opportunities are the same, they are simply organized in a way that provides coherency around the why and how of positioning those created observational experiences to support their professional goals and appraisal conversations. “Potential Resources” is the heading of a column devoted to creating a network of support from resources that I felt were under-utilized. With a “poke in the right direction,” new-hires and mentors would intentionally consider more options as they created observational experiences.

Pair-Shared Observation

The adaptation to the off site visit that did not have a financial impact, yet had a significant instructional impact, was the move from one new-hire and one whole day, to releasing two teachers for half a day each. The Pair Shared Observation (formerly known as the off site visit) is likely the adaptation with the largest disruption to the complex system, and the greatest push on the flywheel (Collins, 2001). In 2006, one day of professional leave was set aside for each new-hire in the district to use to go to another building with a similar population. The new-hire was to observe another teacher in

action, teaching the same content as the new-hire. There were literally no structures in place to support this observational experience; there were no informational flyers; it was not included in the mentor guidelines; principals did not know about it; the opportunity to watch another teacher in another building with professional release time was not marketed or encouraged in any way. The amount paid to substitutes who covered classes for professional release time shows the rapid increase in participation for pair shared observation opportunity.

From 2006–2013, new-hires who knew about the opportunity, with the efficacy to plan the entire experience, from securing a substitute and lessons to cold calling a teacher in another building requesting to observe. In 2006 fewer than 7% participated in the program. In the 2013–2014 school year, the Pair Shared Observations were implemented. The annual cost for substitute coverage from 2006–2016 shows the increase in participation. Once principals (again, whose participation is critical in the success of any district program) realized funding was available to provide professional release time. Word spread quickly from new-hires and mentors returning to their buildings revitalized, full of new ideas, and with a renewed enthusiasm for teaching.

Tenure coursework

Tenure course work was not part of the data collection of this program, however, information learned from the mentor program review informed the structure of LPS tenure course sequence, as well as the content of each course. The adaptation with the largest impact in this area is the creation of tenure courses specific to the new-hire's teaching assignment. In the past, all new-hires attended the same K–12 instructional practices course. In response to feedback from new-hires attending out of compliance to

their contract reported the content was not in alignment with their content area. For the past two years we have offered tenure courses specifically designed for media specialists, school psychologists, early childhood, elementary, and secondary new-hires.

Adaptations, adoptions, and diffusion occur in the evaluation stage of the ILD and are critical components of change facilitation and successful change leadership. As the mentor program continues to cycle through the ILD, adaptations, adoptions, and diffusions will be part of the evolution and evaluation of the program.

Conclusions

When new-hires are not supported, their learning as teachers is not maximized. Simply by investigating the number of new-hires participating in the mentor program and using the principles of complex systems, the number of students in the classes of new-hires can be calculated. The number of students who may have been impacted by a teacher who may not have been supported in this school district alone are considerable and worthy of more attention. While we have the experience of those who participated documented in this study, we are missing the voices of those who did not participate. Because we do not have their voices captured, we are unable to determine the experience—the efficacy or the satisfaction of the school year—as experienced by a new-hire sans the support of the mentor program.

The mentor program as experienced by new-hires in this district depends greatly upon the knowledge the principal has of the program and the opportunities afforded to new-hires and their mentors. If the building principal does not know the program exists, does not assign mentors or does not arrange a time for all stakeholders to learn about the

program and the opportunities it provides to new-hires and mentors, the program and opportunities are not utilized. The mentor program review revealed the program is utilized by two thirds of the building principals. Participation is increasing as principals, mentors, and new-hires share with others their observational experiences and the support the program provides to stakeholders. Seasoned mentors voiced their enthusiasm for observing other teachers in other buildings during the Meet and Welcome meetings. This excitement spilled over to the new-hires. Many of them had questions about making professional leave arrangements. Principals realizing teachers were allowed professional release time was another push for principal participation. Principals, new-hires, and mentors sharing their observational experiences have propelled program participation. From fewer than 7% in 2006, the number of off-site visits has increased to 83%. The number of principals who actively seek a scheduled Meet and Welcome has risen from 45% to 91%. These conversations were the result of the planning and preparation for the Meet and Welcome site visits.

While the mentor program affords observational opportunities, my search for complex system disturbances includes disrupting program structures or activities that directly impact new-hires, mentors and principals. One example might include finding funding for mentors and new-hires to meet and get to know each other prior to the school year starting. Connecting new-hires, mentors, and principals at one of the busiest times of the year will require information from principals and Human Resources that they might not yet have, and is something to work on as a district.

New-hires report being more efficacious than expected. Unique to this research setting are the pre-service teacher preparation programs in the community. Because there

are so many more teachers graduating from colleges and universities in the area than there are available assignments, the market is saturated. This saturation has allowed the District to be very selective in their hiring practices, and to have the luxury of hiring teachers with experience. The high level of reported efficacy might be due to the fact that 19% have more than one year of teaching experience and 25% have between 4–13 years of experience. Almost half of the teachers new to this district come with four or more years of experience.

The surveys, mentor classroom observations, new-hire reflections, and principal interviews provided a clear description of the past and present of the existing mentor program. The ILD provides data to support and opportunities to make adjustments to the mentorship experience in this rapidly growing district.

Thinking About Future Problems of Practice

Design Research

Recommendations for future problems of practice include continuing to implement the Integrative Learning Design as a model for monitoring and adjusting the mentor program to meet the needs of new-hires, mentors, and their principals. It is a fascinating design model, with application potential as a continuous improvement tool in a variety of educational research contexts. The flexibility and rapid results from passing through the ILD stages from a needs analysis, to audience characterization, to formative testing, to creating adaptations from the previous cycle working the cycle of continuous improvement and framework, supporting and documenting actions steps as the project

evolves, is the kind of pushing, pulling, and prying for a reason that inspired this program review and the future iterations of the present program.

From Mentor Program to Induction Program

The move from a mentor program to an induction program supporting mentors throughout their first three years is not out of reach. Sharing the results of this mentor program review with stakeholders is an opportunity to expand programming. The mentor program reviewed in this research lives in isolation with the exception of the four-day new teacher orientation event prior to the start of the teacher contract. The district does not have an induction program in place. New teacher orientation and a mentor program are pieces of an induction program, not a comprehensive transition program to the teaching profession. How does a rapidly growing district respond to the increase in annual hiring and at the same time extend support for (at the very least) the duration of the first three years of teaching? How does one build capacity in mentors as instructional coaches so they are ready to receive and serve their new-hires?

Institutional Collaboration

An extension of support for new-hires after the first year, continuing into the next two years and through the probationary contract, would continue instructional conversations around professional goals and is welcomed by district officials and building principals. Collaborating with colleges and universities in the area to set up structures where educational administration graduate students (who have had training in the Danielson appraisal model [2013] to practice the art and craft of teacher evaluation and appraisal) would be able to work with second or third year teachers while pursuing an administrative certificate, is a conversation that started and is being implemented.

This idea came about as a result of collegial conversations between former district colleagues who are now working with pre-service educational administrators, and was presented at Learning Forward National Conference in December of 2014. This model of collaboration demonstrates how graduate programs can partner with school districts to combine new teachers' need for feedback with aspiring administrators' need for authentic classroom observation experiences. One of the outcomes of this collaboration is the embedded professional development opportunities for all stakeholders, as "continuous professional learning empowers both groups with knowledge, skill, and practice – increasing feelings of efficacy to impact student learning" (Scott & Lehmanowsky, 2014, Conference Presentation Description). While this collaborative effort has great potential and is moving in an exciting direction in support of second and third year teachers, it will not turn the present program into an induction program.

Mentor Program for New Administrators

New principals voiced concern about not knowing about the mentor program during principal focus interviews, which led me to wonder about a new principal mentor program, and how to support principals new to their positions. What might the structure of the program look like? New administrators, much like new teachers would likely benefit from an experienced administrator to help them navigate the complexities of daily life in schools.

Influence on Policy

In future conversations with principals as we work to match new-hires and mentors, I intend to attend to the topic of new teacher assignments. Knowing that new-hires are commonly assigned the most difficult course loads and challenging student

population, principals are the critical element in the complex system, have control over teacher assignment, and the entry point for me to disrupt the system.

A New Me

Because of the scholarly practitioner design of the CPED program, and the colleagues I continue to reach out to as critical friends, I am a very different person than I was prior to this research. I will continue to “poke and pry” with intention and purpose. The ILD is a fascinating design that I will return to as I “work the dialectic” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) of theory and practice. Another application for ILD consideration is administrator professional goal setting and continuous improvement projects. This dissertation comes to a close at the same time my annual professional goals are due. I am excited about the work ahead, and the skills I bring to the educational landscape.

As the student population in the school district continues to grow so will the need for teachers. Questions that must be addressed include, “Is the professional development specialist position serving new-hires in this rapidly growing district really a .50 FTE assignment?” The time and attention necessary to support new-hires, mentors and principals in a rapidly growing district hiring more than 400 new teachers each year as described in this dissertation prove otherwise.

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Appendix A



Official Approval Letter for IRB project #13720

June 16, 2014

Jami Holbein Swanson
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
3900 Randolph Lincoln, NE 68510-4639

Edmund Hamann
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
44B HENZ, UNL, 68588-0355

IRB Number: 20140613720 EX
Project ID: 13720
Project Title: Building efficacy in new teachers through mentor relationships

Dear Jami:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this Institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Exemption Determination: 06/16/2014.

1. The stamped and approved informed consent documents have been uploaded to NUgrant (files with Approved.pdf in the file name). Please distribute these documents to participants. If you need to make changes to the documents, please submit the revised documents to the IRB for review and approval prior to using them.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- * Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- * Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- * Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
- * Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- * Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB



Appendix B

Lincoln Public Schools

**5905 O Street • Box 82889 •
Lincoln, NE 68510 • (402) 436-1790**

RR 14-
70
(NUgrant 13720)

May 29, 2014

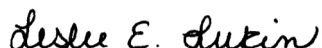
Jami Holbein Swanson, Student
(LPS World Languages Curriculum Specialist)
Edmund Hamann, Ph.D.
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
UNL

RE: Request to Conduct Research

Dear Ms. Holbein Swanson and Dr. Hamann:

Your request to conduct a study entitled, "Building efficacy in new teachers through mentor relationships" with new LPS teachers (and their administrators) participating in the mentoring program is approved. Consent and is required for this study. Please use the forms and processes included in your request.

Sincerely,

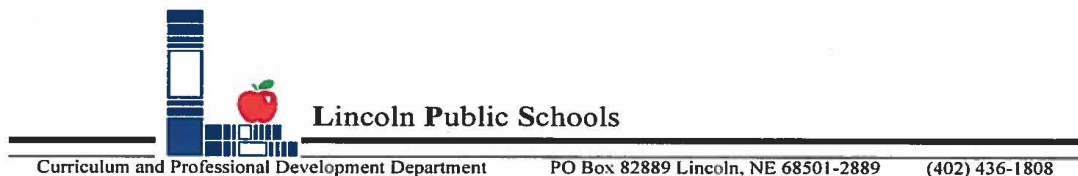


Leslie E. Lukin, Ph.D.
Director of Assessment and Evaluation Services

cc: Jodi Miller, Director of Curriculum
Kay Byers, Supervisor Human Resources

Title of Research: Building efficacy in new teachers through mentor relationships

Appendix C



April 25, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I grant permission to Jami Holbein Swanson to examine program evaluation aggregated survey responses with names removed, collected by the Educational Service Unit from the Lincoln Public Schools Mentor Program participants as part of her doctoral inquiry: Building efficacy in new teachers through mentor relationships.



Dr. Jami Miller
Director of Curriculum and Professional Development
Lincoln Public Schools District Office
402.436.1810
jmiller7@lps.org

Appendix D

Mentor Teacher Program Summary for Lincoln Public Schools Spring 2001

This document was found in the Lincoln Public School mentor program archives was not dated or signed by the author. Based on other documents, I believe it was created by Ann Timm in the fall of 2000.

The Nebraska Mentor Teacher Program grant provides funding to support mentoring for first-year public school teachers. First year teachers are defined as individuals entering the K-12 teaching profession in their first year of contracted service. One hundred seventeen met state criteria for the one-year funding.

The LPS mentoring program, called LEEP, Lincoln's Emerging Educators' Program, began in August 1999 as we welcomed new teachers to LPS. The LEEP vision is to assist all new teachers in becoming more caring, competent, independent yet collaborative, dedicated professional educators prepared to help all students learn at high levels. The LPS program exceeds state criteria by extending support for the entire three-year probationary period and offering assistance to all teachers new to LPS, not just teachers new to the profession.

LEEP is guided by a framework for teaching and learning based on the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students; teachers are committed to students and their learning, responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; and teachers will systematically think about their practice and learn from experience. Our goal is to attract, help develop, and retain quality teachers.

Every new teacher will be provided an experienced teacher as a mentor. Mentors must meet the Rule 26 criteria as well as be trained in cognitive coaching and reflection and in classroom data collection leading to the awareness of disparities in teacher-student interactions. LPS Mentors must hold a valid Nebraska teaching or administrative certificate, be tenured, and currently employed. Mentors must volunteer and many not hold a supervisory position. In addition, LPS asks that mentors be recommended by their principals, have exemplary appraisals and experience teaching adults, and be willing to attend mentor training.

The mentor role centers upon the instructional improvement of new teachers. Through planned structured contact including classroom observations of their mentee and model teaching, mentors will work with mentor coordinators to

meet the individual needs of their mentee. Planning calendars and reflection logs will record not only the times but also the impact of structured contact.

Fifty percent of the mentor program grant funds must be used to pay mentors. LPS has committed to paying mentors \$500 per mentee, providing one day of released time per semester for observations, a stipend for training, a professional library, and additional staff development and leadership opportunities. Supplementary to grant funds reserved for first-year teachers only, the district is committed to provide compensation in the additional two years of mentoring for both teachers new to the profession as well as for teachers new to LPS.

Mentor support for new teachers will be augmented by sustained staff development for all new teachers for the three-year periods: eight days in year one, six days in year two, and four days in year three, plus twenty hours per year of extended-day sessions. District tenure requirements will be integrated into these staff development experiences. Attendance at all planned activities will result in the new teacher receiving a stipend for the extra days each year, completing tenure requirements, and, upon payment of district fees, qualifying for six hours of salary advancement credit at the end of the probationary period. The extensive staff development will address the concerns of new teachers identified by national research as well as local needs assessments, both group and individual.

The Lincoln new teacher will be girded by a support team including the key instructional mentor as well as the building administrator, a building guide, an orientation partner, content consultants, and a mentor program coordinator. Mentors and mentees are matched according to state guidelines: both endorsement field and grade level as well as building if at all possible. If not, endorsement field is the first consideration followed by grade level and building. Presently, LPS has matched 142 elementary and 99 secondary mentor/mentee pairs.

LPS supported the training of mentors through two Mentor Academies, one held in July and a second held in October, presented by nationally known consultants. Funds for mentor training are supported by a competitive Tier II Grant awarded the Staff Development Office in April of 1999.

According to Patricia Wasley in *Education Leadership* (May 1999), "we must enable all emerging teachers to build a repertoire that excites kids, keeps them engaged, and sends them twirling off to learn more." We are confident that a three-year mentoring program centered upon one-on-one mentoring and strengthened by staff development focused on the specific needs of new teachers as well as the district emphasis of quality instructional practices and educational equity will assure that LPS does just that.

Appendix E

Reflective Thinking Summary December 4, 2001

The Reflective Thinking Summary describes and analyzes the effectiveness of the strategy and its impact on the new teachers.

To: Ann Timm and Gerry Larson

From: Bob Reineke

Subject: Reflective Thinking Summary

The purpose of this report is to describe procedures and findings regarding implementation of the Mentoring Academy Program conducted in Lincoln Public Schools over the past two years.

An emphasis for the Mentoring Academy, operated as a part of the LEEP program for new teachers, was to foster reflective thinking about their teaching practices. A major purpose for the evaluation was to gauge the extent that teachers might have changed in their capacity to be reflective over a period of time.

A Michigan research team developed a "reflective thinking" rubric designed for use in a face-to-face interview to determine the extent that description of a given teaching event included "reflective" thinking. This five point rubric was revised somewhat for use as a "canned" set of questions that teachers tape-recorded their responses.

In February 2000 305 tapes and a set of instructions were sent to new teachers and their mentors. One hundred eighty-six tapes were returned for a response rate of 61 percent. One hundred sixty-five turned out to be useable. These tapes were then given special ID numbers such that only the evaluation specialist knew the identity of teachers who had completed tapes. Finally, the set of completed tapes were transcribed and sanitized.

The next step was to have the tapes reviewed and scored against the aforementioned rubric. On June 13, 2000, four teacher raters knowledgeable in reflective thinking were identified and given about six hours of training in how to score the transcripts. The training involved introducing the teacher raters to the rubric, having them rate 12 tapes and then comparing and discussing their respective ratings. A relatively adequate rater agreement was obtained after several rounds of discussion. As a result of the meeting the scale was changed from 5 points

(including zero) to six points. Raters were then given instructions for rating tapes at home, where points included:

- Relaxed concentration/take breaks/probably not more than 3 or 4 hours per day
- Accuracy is “your best shot”
- Estimate three or so per hour (some longer, some shorter)
- Thirty at a time – important not to do them all at the end
- You may find your own – do not rate it
- The information provided by your colleagues is “theirs.” Please treat it confidentially and with respect. Quality of responses will vary – remember we’re learning this stuff.

Raters were then sent sets of tapes for rating: two individuals rated each tape. Ratings were entered into a spreadsheet and reviewed for congruence between raters.

The extent of agreement raters displayed in rating the one hundred sixty-five “reflective thinking” transcripts is shown in Table 1 below. Differences in raters’ values for the same transcripts varied from no difference to a difference of 5.5 on a six-point scale.

Table 1
Rater Agreement (Frequency and Percent)

Agreement Difference	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
0	29	29	18	18
.5	25	54	15	33
1	48	102	29	62
1.5	9	111	6	68
2	27	138	16	84
2.5	8	146	5	89
3	14	160	8	97
3.5	1	161	.5	97.5
4	2	163	1	98.5
4.5	0	163	0	98.5
5	1	164	.5	99
5.5	1	165	.5	99.5 ¹

This table shows that 111 transcripts (68 percent) received ratings from the two raters that differed by one and a half points or less. Eighty-four percent of the ratings differed by 2 points or less. It is noted that the correlation value between the ratings is .68².

A third rater completed 55 ratings of those transcripts where raters deviated from each other by more than one and a half points. The third rates scores were nearly always consistent with one of the two ratings provided by other raters. In forty-eight of the fifty-five cases, the third rater's ratings were within one point of one or the other of the two raters (17 showed no difference; 11 had a half point difference and 20 differed by one point.) In seven cases the three raters apparently saw different things. For these seven transcripts, rating values for each of the two initial raters along with those made by the third rater are shown in table 2 below.

¹Not equal to 100 percent due to rounding error.

²Person's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Table 2
Disparate Ratings

Transcript Number	Rater 1	Rater 2	Third Rater
23	Blank	3	4.5
55	0	3	1.5
66	0	5	3.5
76	2	5	3.5
92	0	4	2
171	2.5	5	0
176	0	2	4

In four of the seven cases the third rater rated the transcript between the other two ratings. Transcripts numbered 66, 92, 171 and 176 are "interesting cases" that suggest that there may be differences in what raters perceived as an "instructional event." It is assumed that in most cases Mentor/Mentee transcripts were given a

zero because the rater did not perceive the narrative as describing a single instructional event.

All raters did not rate papers the same on average, although each rater did have a unique set of transcripts to review. The average rating for each rater is as follows: Rate 1 (mean = 3.15) Rater 2, (mean = 2.45), Rater 3 (mean = 3.59) and Rater 4 (mean = 4.01). The difference between raters two and four (about a point and a half) suggests a systematic difference in the ratings they make³.

As a group, Mentors and Mentees' transcripts were received different ratings. Mentors received an average rating of 3.57; Mentees' average rating was 3.08. That mentors received higher scores than mentees lends credence to the rubric and scoring procedure, as it would be expected that seasoned teachers would in fact do better than those in their first year.

In September 2001, 150 tapes were sent to the teachers who participated in the reflective thinking exercise the previous year. Teachers were again asked to reflect on a teaching episode and respond to the same set of questions as in the first program year. Thirty-one of the 150 completed the exercise for a response rate of 21 percent. Seventeen of the 31 respondents were teacher mentors and 14 were teachers that were mentored.

Ratings were completed on these thirty-one tape transcripts using the same procedure for the previous year. Mentors average ratings were 3.35 for the first set of transcripts and 3.45 for the second set, a difference of one-tenth of a rating point. For Mentees, the first rating was 2.63 and the second rating 2.93, a difference of three-tenths of a rating point. Both mentor and mentee groups show increases in ratings from the first to second year. A correlated T-test was performed on the pairs of scores for Mentors and Mentees, neither reached a level of statistical significance. A t-test of the combined groups also failed to yield a statistically significant value. The statistical conclusion is that there is no difference in mean ratings from one year to the next.

It is interesting to note that those individuals who choose to participate during the second year had lower average scores in year one than those who chose not to participate. The average score for the entire mentor group from year one was 3.57 and for those who participated in year two, their average first-year score was 3.45. For mentees, the difference was greater; the entire group's year one mean score was 3.08 and the mean first-year score for the group who participated in the second round was 2.63.

From a program perspective, the lack of (statistically) significant improvement in teachers' capability to be reflective in their work is disappointing. It should be

noted, however, that several factors probably contributed to muting program results.

First, the district has been engaged in several district-wide initiatives requiring training and time for teachers to implement them. Such initiatives are in addition to general district and state tenure requirements. Information gathered from other evaluation efforts (i.e. multiple teacher focus groups) indicate that many teachers new to the district at times feel overwhelmed when faced with multiple demands on their time.

Second, the rubric and rating process were less than perfect. Although a respectable degree of rater agreement was achieved for the reflective thinking transcripts, there were several cases where disagreement was substantial. In other cases, there were apparent differences in opinion about what constituted an “instructional event.”

Third, the response rate for the second round of completing tapes regarding reflective thinking was poor – roughly one in five. It is believed that this meager response may in part be related to the demands on teacher time mentioned above.

Fourth, direct instruction and practice in reflective thinking did not routinely occur for new teachers. Again, the number of other demands placed on new teachers likely contributed to diluting the focus for this initiative. It seems clear that the context for reflective thinking training and growth is an important consideration for future work.

In spite of the lack of more definitive findings, it is believed that the goal of enhancing reflective thinking on the part of all K-12 teachers continues to be a valued one, and that this program may benefit from additional study and modification.

³This does not suggest either rater is wrong.

Appendix F

Evaluation of Lincoln's Emerging Educators Program August 1, 2001

Issues that surfaced in March 2001 became the focus of a survey for use with all LEEP participants in March of 2001.

MEMO

ESU #18	EVALUATION TEAM	LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
5901 O STREET	LINCOLN, NE 68510	(402) 436-1795 FAX (402) 436-1829

AUGUST 1, 2001

TO: NANCY BIGGS, ANN TIMM, GERRY LARSON, AND NANCY BRANDT
FROM: BOB REINEKE
SUBJECT: LEEP SURVEY

This memorandum outlines some issues to address as we consider development of a survey for use with all LEEP participants.

Issues that arose in the several focus groups conducted during March 2001.

Twenty-nine of forty-eight invited mentors of secondary or elementary teachers and mentored elementary or secondary teachers participated in the hour-long meetings. Seventeen were first or second year (nine elementary and eight secondary) mentored teachers and twelve were mentors (five elementary and seven secondary). Sessions were tape-recorded and one hundred twenty-five single spaced pages of transcripts were generated.

The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources led the focus groups and an Evaluation Specialist was also in attendance. The Assistant Superintendent began each focus group with a brief "set" that outlined the purpose and process for the meeting.

We are interested in what we are doing with new staff and looking at whether

we are meeting their needs. One way to get some information is by talking

to small groups of new teachers and mentors. The evaluation team helped us invite mentors and mentored teachers (selected randomly) to talk with us about what you're hearing and what you think about the application process, the interview process, the selection process, the induction (or LEEP) process with new teachers, and their reaction to it. So, we're going to talk about those things today and we will record what you have to say. We are not going to keep track of who said what, but the tape will b

transcribed, sanitized (names deleted) and reviewed to look at whether we need to look further into issues or identify things that need to be changed.

LEEP Questionnaire

To help put you at ease, remember that we will transcribe the tape, deleting all the references to schools or people. We're just interested in information, not in who said what, so we hope you feel free to say what's on your mind. We're looking for constructive criticism or accolades or whatever you have to say. What would you change? What would you keep the same?

Themes based on information obtained from the six groups are listed by topics including the application, interview and selection process, the LEEP Program and appraisal. Emphasis here is on suggestions and constructive criticisms.

Application Interview and Selection Process

The LPS application has more detailed questions and a more thorough, intense application process. It is doable, but some space and spacing issues were problematic for several individuals (e.g. how do I get all this typed here?)

There were mixed reactions to the perceiver: for some stressful, for others fine. Going to colleagues – setting them up that way is the best thing.

Information was available at the district office – but trouble getting there before closing.

“Advance” was great.

Preference was made for school interview to be a small (casual) group.

Lateness in hiring was mentioned as a problem.

The new employee meeting was very useful but contained too much information.

Some new teachers have reported they were kind of in the dark until the last minute. They didn't know whether to prepare or not.

LEEP PROGRAM

At LPS there is a lot of staff development opportunities, but felt the topics were not critical ones for someone new to district, e.g. how to fill out SPED paperwork.

There were too many things to accomplish – LEEP requirements along with six-trait writing, etc. Time is a problem. Teachers may need more choices during the first year.

Reduce the number of handouts and stuff.

Review topic offerings and order of presentation: survival stuff early.

Alter staff development opportunities for new (right out of college) teachers versus those with multiple years of experience.

Meetings times and places were at times difficult.

Spell out LEEP requirements early, in a clear and understandable way.

Some concern about time in class vs. time in school (classroom).

Growth portfolio is too much to ask of the new teacher – along with other things.

Teachers in LEEP need breaks.

Mentoring: it's important that you have someone to bounce ideas off. Collegiality is more valuable than doing observations.

Orientation things are very helpful to the new teacher. New teacher meetings at schools would be helpful. Have a social event early by building.

Second year has been more organized and not as demanding.

Mentor training was a good experience.

Best if mentor in same building, same area also is good.

More opportunities to spend time talking in small groups would be beneficial.

The curriculum part of LEEP was very good – I just wish there had been more.

Appraisal

May need principal/coordinator to describe appraisal process

Appendix G

Lincoln's Emerging Educator's Program Casual Observations Memo February 1, 2002

New teachers are overwhelmed with the transition to teaching and are confused about professional obligations: What is required and what is requested. The program needs to be revised; tenure requirements, professional requirements and the demands of the profession are important considerations.

MEMO

ESU #18	EVALUATION TEAM	LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
5901 O STREET	LINCOLN, NE 68510	(402) 436-1795 FAX (402) 436-1829

February 1, 2002

TO: NANCY BIGGS, ANN TIMM, GERRY LARSON, AND NANCY BRANDT
FROM: BOB REINEKE
SUBJECT: LEEP SURVEY

The purpose of this brief memo is to convey thoughts that some strategic thinking would be helpful before we proceed to collect additional information. Some casual observations:

New staff members appear to be 'overwhelmed' with professional development offerings and requirements coming from, building ventures, district initiatives, curriculum and assessment programs, and tenure.

New staff members are most concerned about quite specific building, curriculum, and classroom instruction (and assessment) questions.

The sheer number and variety of professional development offerings from several sources with multiple handouts and requirements adds to the complexity of professional development as seen from the perspective of the new teacher. This is especially true for first year (new) teachers.

Mentoring is viewed as valuable, especially collegiality.

Some Issues & Questions:

Tenure requirements: Do we need to re-examine the logic and thinking related to district policy regarding tenure? Are tenure requirements (courses) the ones that are most needed? Are there other options to reaching tenure, e.g. a professional portfolio? Do new teachers understand tenure requirements?

How much “professional development” is going on in the district/buildings that is in addition to LEEP tenure and non-tenure offerings? How does this impact LEEP/tenure offerings for the new teacher?

How can Staff address their work load, reduce the number of activities and products with attendant increased attention to fewer activities and products that may be more useful to new staff (in particular)?

What process is needed to carry out the evaluation function regarding the aforementioned areas? What are program boundaries, limitations, barriers, that limit staff and what opportunities and/or resources are available?

Are first/second year teachers in a position to “choose” wisely what is most helpful for their professional growth? - - They have told us how they feel.

Who (mentors? / principals? / Others?) best know the press on new teachers?

How much have “new teachers” changed over the past 5 years? What impact has fewer applicants had on who is hired?

Have district initiatives and other factors changed enough over the past five years or so to warrant a general review of “demands” placed on new teachers?

Professional Development Review Strategy

- Review revised plan
- Identify plausible options
- Tenure requirements – options?
- Other district requirements (reading/math/assessment) – options?

Appendix H

Lincoln Public Schools Self-Report New Hire Survey July 2014

Page One

Welcome to the LPS New Hire Self-Report Survey. Thank you for your participation. The purpose of this survey is to determine what types of professional learning opportunities you would like to have as a new hire to Lincoln Public Schools. All of your responses will be kept confidential and only reported as the group of new hires who answered the questions. Results from this survey will be used to make changes in the program and to offer meaningful and appropriate professional development in the future.

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?

- ☐ 1 year or less
- ☐ More than 1 but less than 4 years
- ☐ More than 4 but less than 8 years
- ☐ More than 8 but less than 13 years
- ☐ 13 or more years

2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree plus 15 credits or more
- ☐ Ph. D. or Ed.D.

3) Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

4) What is your age?

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ Older than 65

5) What is your Full Time Employee (FTE) Status? Full Time = 1.0

- ☐ Less than 0.5
- ☐ 0.5 or more

6) How would you describe your main teaching assignment in terms of grade level? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend most of your time.

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ Middle school
- ☐ High school

7) How would you describe your MAIN teaching assignment for the current school year? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend the majority of your time.

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ ELL
- ☐ English
- ☐ Grade-level teacher (e.g. pre-K or grade 2 teacher)
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Occupational Therapist
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ School Psychologist
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Special Education Teacher (in either a self-contained classroom, an inclusion model, or home-base teacher)
- ☐ Speech Language Pathologist
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ World Language

8) How long to you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another school?

- ☐ 2 years or less
- ☐ 3 to 5 years
- ☐ 6 to 9 years
- ☐ 10 years or more
- ☐ Undecided or unsure at this time

PROGRAM QUALITY

9) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you need in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.

	Wanted Minimal Support	Wanted Moderate Support	Wanted Extensive Support
The curriculum I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for my current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g. analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	()	()	()
Creating a positive learning environment.	()	()	()
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()
Evaluating and reflecting upon my own teaching practices.	()	()	()

10) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am confident in my ability to teach effectively.	()	()	()	()

I can handle a range of challenging classroom management and discipline situations.	()	()	()	()
If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I know techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	()	()	()	()
I am equally successful in helping students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds to learn.	()	()	()	()
I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()	()
I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of special education students.	()	()	()	()
If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.	()	()	()	()
If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	()	()	()	()
If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to create a positive learning environment.	()	()	()	()
Increased my effectiveness in using informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()	()

I am able to adapt instruction so that I meet the needs of students at varying academic levels equally well.	()	()	()	()
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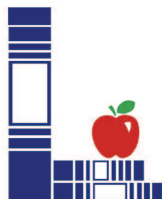
11) What do you anticipate to be your greatest challenge in your first year in Lincoln Public Schools? Why?

12) In what area do you expect to be your greatest area of success? Why?

Thank You!

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will inform and improve the professional development offered to new hires in our district.

Appendix I



Lincoln Public Schools Mentoring Program 2014-2015 Fall Semester

The Role of the Mentor

A mentor is a master teacher in the same content area, same grade level, close in proximity, who is available as a “go-to-person” to guide a new hire. More importantly, the mentor’s role is to support the new hire, as he or she builds capacity and confidence to make his or her own informed decisions. During this journey, the mentor models life long learning and the importance of continuously improving his or her knowledge of teaching and learning.

Mentors for New to the Profession Teachers

New to the profession teachers receive mentors for 18 weeks (first semester). These new hires have recently graduated from college or are new to the profession. Mentors are compensated \$350 for working with a new to the profession teacher.

Mentors for New to the District Teachers

New to the district teachers receive mentors for 9 weeks (first quarter/term). These new hires have experience in other school districts. Mentors are compensated \$175 for working with a new to the district teacher.

Contact Time

A minimum of four contacts is expected over **each** nine-week period. Three of those contacts are informal visits (i.e., before & after school, during lunch & planning time, etc.) One contact should be formal and include an instructional focus. This is a time when the mentor conducts a classroom observation. Mentors will be provided a class cover for the classroom observation. Please have your secretary contact Amy Windle (awindle@lps.org) to make arrangements for subs.

Payment of Stipend to Mentors

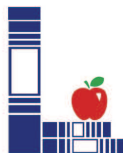
At the end of the mentor period, the mentor sends the pre-observation conference form, their observation notes, and the mentee’s reflection log to the professional development department. All mentor/mentee forms are due to the professional development office (box 45 or scanned and emailed to awindle@lps.org) by Friday, December 19, 2014. [New to the profession mentors conduct two formal observations. New to the district conduct one formal observation.](#)

Meet and Welcome

Jami Holbein Swanson is the professional development specialist who supports new hires at the district level. She will work out a time for mentors and new teachers to learn about the program the first few weeks of school in your building. Both new teachers and mentors should be in attendance.

“The degree to which I create relationships which facilitate growth of others as separate persons is a measure of the growth I have achieved myself.”

-Carl Sandberg



Pre-Observation Discussion Guide

Observation 1

Those being observed will find this guide handy in preparing for the observation as well as the discussion afterward. It can be used as a tool for alerting the observer of special situations in the room, which might be misunderstood without explanation prior to the observation. It also serves as a way of focusing the observation on areas of particular concern to the person being observed. You may type on this document and then print or print and hand write your information. **This form is due in the professional development office (box 45) by Friday, December 19, 2014.**

School: _____ 9 – weeks or 18 - weeks

Person Observing: _____ Employee ID # _____

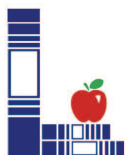
Person Being Observed: _____

Observation Date, Time & Location: _____

What is important for me to know about your class before observing it?

Where are you in the unit of study?

What specific student behavior(s) would you like me to watch for, if any?



Classroom Observation Form

Observation 1

Teacher Observed: _____ Date: _____

Observing Teacher: _____ Observation Length: _____

This form is intended for the observer to use as a guide during the follow-up discussion. The observer will be concentrating on four main areas listed below. Use the available space for recording specific teacher or student behaviors/responses that you would like to discuss in a post-observation conference. For example: "I noticed that Eric left the room after you exchanged a 'thumbs-up' sign."

Organizing Content and Planning:

Environment:

Instruction:

Additional Comments:

You may type in and print this document or print the empty document and hand-write your information to be turned in to the professional development office (box 45) or scanned and emailed to awindle@lps.org by Friday, December 19, 2014.

What specific teacher behavior(s) would you like me to watch for?

Upon which of the following would you most like me to concentrate: planning, environment or instruction? Explain the reasons for your choice.

What specific objectives do you have for this lesson? (Attach lesson plans, handouts, examples of student work, etc.)

Additional comments/requests/suggestions:

"A thought which does not result in an action is nothing much, and an action which does not proceed from a thought is nothing at all."

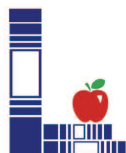
— Georges Bernanos

Mentee Reflection Log

Reflect upon goals (both teacher and student-learning) by assessing, recalling, comparing, and inferring current status with hoped-for and future growth.

Looking Ahead: Developing Action Steps

You may type in and print this document or print the empty document and hand-write your information. Please give this document to your mentor. It is to be turned in with the observation forms to the professional development office (box 45) or scanned and emailed to awindle@lps.org by Friday, December 19, 2014.



Pre-Observation Discussion Guide

Observation 2 for new to the profession mentors and mentees

Those being observed will find this guide handy in preparing for the observation as well as the discussion afterward. It can be used as a tool for alerting the observer of special situations in the room, which might be misunderstood without explanation prior to the observation. It also serves as a way of focusing the observation on areas of particular concern to the person being observed. You may type on this document and then print or print and hand write your information. **This form is due in the professional development office (box 45) by Friday, December 19, 2014.**

School: _____ 9 – weeks or 18 - weeks

Person Observing: _____ Employee ID # _____

Person Being Observed: _____

Observation Date, Time & Location: _____

What is important for me to know about your class before observing it?

Where are you in the unit of study?

What specific student behavior(s) would you like me to watch for, if any?

What specific teacher behavior(s) would you like me to watch for?

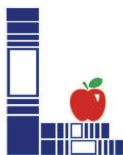
Upon which of the following would you most like me to concentrate: planning, environment or instruction? Explain the reasons for your choice.

What specific objectives do you have for this lesson? (Attach lesson plans, handouts, examples of student work, etc.)

Additional comments/requests/suggestions:

"A thought which does not result in an action is nothing much, and an action which does not proceed from a thought is nothing at all."

— Georges Bernanos



Classroom Observation Form

Observation 2 for new to the profession mentors and mentees

Teacher Observed: _____ Date: _____

Observing Teacher: _____ Observation Length: _____

This form is intended for the observer to use as a guide during the follow-up discussion. The observer will be concentrating on four main areas listed below. Use the available space for recording specific teacher or student behaviors/responses that you would like to discuss in a post-observation conference. For example: "I noticed that Eric left the room after you exchanged a 'thumbs-up' sign."

Organizing Content and Planning:

Environment:

Instruction:

Additional Comments:

You may type in and print this document or print the empty document and hand-write your information to be turned in to the professional development office (box 45) or scanned and emailed to awindle@lps.org by Friday, December 19, 2014.

Mentee Reflection Log

Reflect upon goals (both teacher and student-learning) by assessing, recalling, comparing, and inferring current status with hoped-for and future growth.

Looking Ahead: Developing Action Steps

You may type in and print this document or print the empty document and hand-write your information. Please give this document to your mentor. It is to be turned in with the observation forms to the professional development office (box 45) or scanned and emailed to awindle@lps.org by Friday, December 19, 2014.

Appendix J

Lincoln Public Schools Mentor Program Principal Interview Protocol

Six interviews total: 2 Elementary Principal, 2 Middle Level Principal and 2 High School Principal Interviews
45 minutes per interview

Name of Principal _____

Date _____

LPS Mentor Program

Introduction Protocol for all interview sessions:

- .. Introduce yourself
- .. Discuss the purpose of the study
- .. Provide informed consent
- .. Provide structure of the interview
(audio recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- .. Ask if they have any questions
- .. Test audio recording equipment
- .. Smile, open body position-make the participants feel comfortable

Conclusion Protocol for all interview sessions:

- Is there anything else you would like to add or share about this topic that you feel is important for me to know?
- .. Thank them for their participation
 - .. Ask if they would like to see a copy of the results
 - .. Record any observations, feelings, thoughts and/or reactions about the interview

1. How many new employees do you hire in a typical year?

2. Do you anticipate all should have a mentor?

3. How do you assign mentors to your new-hires?

4. What does that process look like? When? Why?

5. What are the characteristics of an effective mentor? Is there one type of mentor or several?
6. Are there matches you look to make? Avoid?
7. Do new-hires and mentors have regularly scheduled meetings?
8. Are there additional informal meetings?
9. How closely do you monitor or keep aware of informal meeting times?
10. Has the LPS Mentor Program impacted your teachers and their transition in your building? In what ways?
11. What are some outcomes of the LPS Mentor Program for mentors? For new-hires?
12. What changes/additions would you like to see in district efforts support to the work of mentors?

Appendix K

Lincoln Public Schools End of First Semester New Hire Survey 2014

Page One

Welcome to the LPS Mentor Program New Hire Survey. Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to measure the quality of the Lincoln Public Schools Mentor Program to determine what is effective and what needs improvement. All of your responses will be kept confidential and only reported as the group of new hires who answered the questions. Results from this survey will be used to make changes in the program and to offer meaningful and appropriate professional development in the future.

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?

- ☐ 1 year or less
- ☐ More than 1 but less than 4 years
- ☐ More than 4 but less than 8 years
- ☐ More than 8 but less than 13 years
- ☐ 13 or more years

2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree plus 15 credits or more
- ☐ Ph. D. or Ed.D.

3) Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

4) What is your age?

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ Older than 65

5) What is your Full Time Employee (FTE) Status? Full Time = 1.0

- ☐ Less than 0.5
- ☐ 0.5 or more

6) How would you describe your main teaching assignment in terms of grade level? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend most of your time.

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ Middle school
- ☐ High school

7) How would you describe your MAIN teaching assignment for the current school year? If you work with students in multiple grade levels, please choose the grouping with which you spend the majority of your time.

- ☐ Art
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ ELL
- ☐ English
- ☐ Grade-level teacher (e.g. pre-K or grade 2 teacher)
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Occupational Therapist
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ School Psychologist
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Special Education Teacher (in either a self-contained classroom, an inclusion model, or home-base teacher)
- ☐ Speech Language Pathologist
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ World Language

8) How long do you plan to be a classroom teacher at either your current school or another school?

- ☐ 2 years or less
 - ☐ 3 to 5 years
 - ☐ 6 to 9 years
 - ☐ 10 years or more
 - ☐ Undecided or unsure at this time
-

PROGRAM QUALITY

9) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you have needed in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.

	Wanted Minimal Support	Wanted Moderate Support	Wanted Extensive Support
The curriculum I teach.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	()	()	()
Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for my current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students I currently teach.	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g. analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	()	()	()
Creating a positive learning environment.	()	()	()
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()
Evaluating and reflecting upon my own teaching practices.	()	()	()

10) Were you assigned a mentor?

10A) How often have you interacted with your assigned mentors this school year on a formal basis? On a formal basis means interacting during dedicated or scheduled time; this does not include, for example, short conversations while passing in the hall.

- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ Several times per week
- ☐ Daily

10B) How often have you interacted with your assigned mentors this school year on an informal basis? On an informal basis means, engaging in short conversations during the school day.

- ☐ Once
- ☐ A few times
- ☐ Once per month
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ Several times per week
- ☐ Daily

11) Think about all of the new teacher supports you have received during the current school year including the previous summer. Please indicate the extent to which these supports have improved your knowledge and skills in the following areas.

	Not at all	Minimal extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Deepened my grasp of the subject matter I teach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased my knowledge of instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject matter I teach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved my classroom management.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved my interactions with parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Improved my ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs of students at varying academic levels.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to plan lessons and design instruction.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to adapt instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to meet the instructional needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to meet the instructional needs of English language learners.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to create a positive learning environment.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to use data (e.g. analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()	()
Increased my effectiveness in using informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()	()
Improved my ability to evaluate and reflect upon my own teaching practices.	()	()	()	()

12) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am confident in my ability to teach effectively.	()	()	()	()
I can handle a range of challenging classroom management and discipline situations.	()	()	()	()
If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I know techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	()	()	()	()
I am equally successful in helping students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds to learn.	()	()	()	()
I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()	()
I have the knowledge and skills I need to address the needs of special education students.	()	()	()	()
If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students.	()	()	()	()
If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	()	()	()	()
If one of my students couldn't do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	()	()	()	()
Increased my ability to create a	()	()	()	()

positive learning environment.				
Increased my effectiveness in using informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()	()
I am able to adapt instruction so that I meet the needs of students at varying academic levels equally well.	()	()	()	()

13) Did you complete the mentor observation reflection paperwork?

14) What recommendations might you have regarding the observation and reflection forms?

15) Thinking about everything you have experienced in the past year, what advice do you have for next year's new hires?

16) What recommendations for professional learning opportunities do you have for the professional development office?

Thank You!

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will inform and improve the professional development offered to new hires in our district.

Appendix L

Lincoln Public Schools Mentoring Program End of First Semester Mentor Survey

Page One

Welcome to the End of First Semester LPS Mentor Program New Hire Mentor Survey. Thank you for participating in this survey regarding the LPS Mentor Program. You have received the survey because you are a mentor for a new hire and are participating in the LPS Mentor Program. The information you provide regarding your involvement in the mentor program will help us to make meaningful program improvements. All information provided will be anonymous and not tied to specific new hires or those who mentor them.

1) Including the current year but not student teaching, how many years of experience do you have in education?

- ☐ More than 1 but less than 4 years
- ☐ More than 4 but less than 8 years
- ☐ More than 8 but less than 13 years
- ☐ 13 or more years

2) What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree plus 15 credits or more
- ☐ Ph. D. or Ed.D.

3) Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

4) What is your age?

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ Older than 65

5) What is your Full Time Employee (FTE) Status? Full Time = 1.0

- ☐ Less than 0.5
- ☐ 0.5 or more

11) How many schools do you currently mentor in?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two
- ☐ Three or more

12) Typically, how long is an average meeting with your new hires?

- ☐ Once a month or less often
- ☐ Every two weeks
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ More than once a week

13) Typically, how long is an average meeting with your beginning teachers?

- ☐ 30 minutes or less
- ☐ 1 hour
- ☐ 1 hour and 30 minutes
- ☐ 2 hours or more

14) Typically how often do you and your principal or person who assigned your new hire to you set aside time to discuss your work with new hires?

- ☐ Never
 - ☐ Once yearly
 - ☐ Twice yearly
 - ☐ Every 6 weeks
 - ☐ Monthly
 - ☐ Every two weeks
 - ☐ Weekly
-

PROGRAM QUALITY

15) Thinking about this school year, indicate the level of support you have provided in the following areas. Please indicate the level of support as minimal, moderate, or extensive.

	Wanted Minimal Support	Wanted Moderate Support	Wanted Extensive Support
Curriculum the new hire teaches.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques appropriate for the grade level/subject the new hire works with.	()	()	()
Classroom management techniques appropriate for the students the new hire works with.	()	()	()
The use of textbooks or other curricular materials for the new hire's current position.	()	()	()
Strategies for interaction with parents of the students the new hire currently teaches	()	()	()
The use of data (e.g. analyzing student work or student test scores) to plan instruction.	()	()	()
Adapting instruction for students with individualized education programs.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds.	()	()	()
Instructional techniques to meet the needs of English language learners.	()	()	()
Planning lessons and designing instruction.	()	()	()
Creating a positive learning environment.	()	()	()
The use of informal and formal assessment strategies.	()	()	()
Evaluating and reflecting upon teaching practices.	()	()	()

Mentor Development

16) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, the mentoring program has assisted me in developing my mentoring skills.	()	()	()	()
I am clear about the expectations for my role.	()	()	()	()
The initial meeting at my building with my principal and the district professional development specialist was sufficient to get me started.	()	()	()	()
To increase my mentor skills I would participate in on-going training from the professional development office to be more effective in my role as a mentor.	()	()	()	()

17) Did you complete the LPS Mentor Observation and reflection paperwork?

(yes)

(no)

18) What recommendations might you have regarding the observation and reflection forms?

19) Overall, to what degree do you think your mentor-ship had an impact on your new hires' professional development?

() None at all

() Hardly any

() Some

() Quite a bit

() A great deal

20) Overall, to what degree do you think the mentoring program helps new teachers in the following ways:

	None at all	Hardly any	Some	Quite a bit	A great deal
Stay in the field of education	()	()	()	()	()
Grow as a professional	()	()	()	()	()
Learn to work collaboratively with other teachers	()	()	()	()	()
Develop effective parent communication	()	()	()	()	()
Other (please specify below)	()	()	()	()	()

Provide space for comments

21) How can the Professional Development office support your development as a mentor?

22) How can the LPS Mentor Program continue to support new hires?

23) What recommendations for professional learning opportunities do you have for the professional development office?

Thank You!

Thank you for completing this survey. Your responses will inform and improve the professional development offered mentors and to new hires in our district.
